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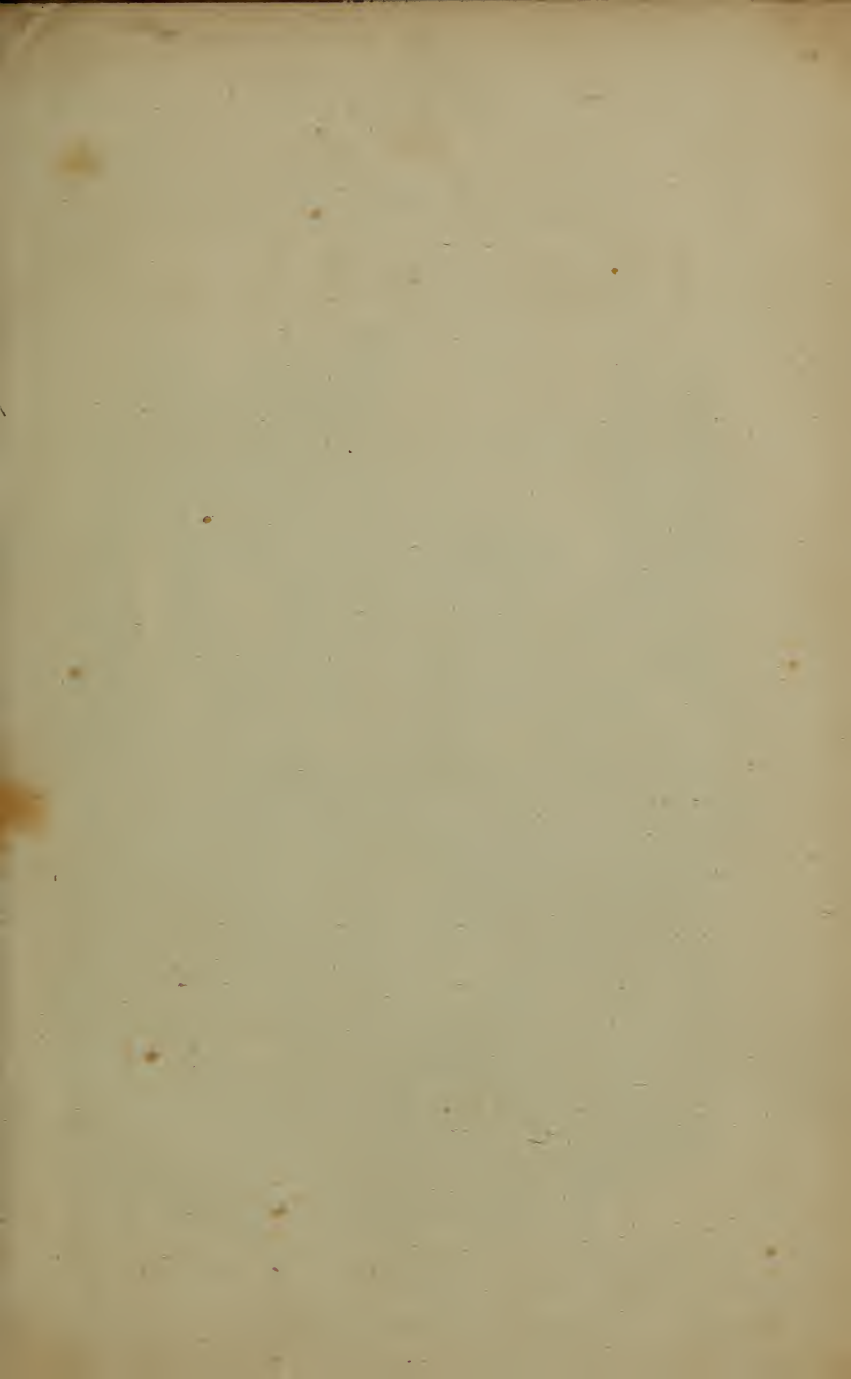
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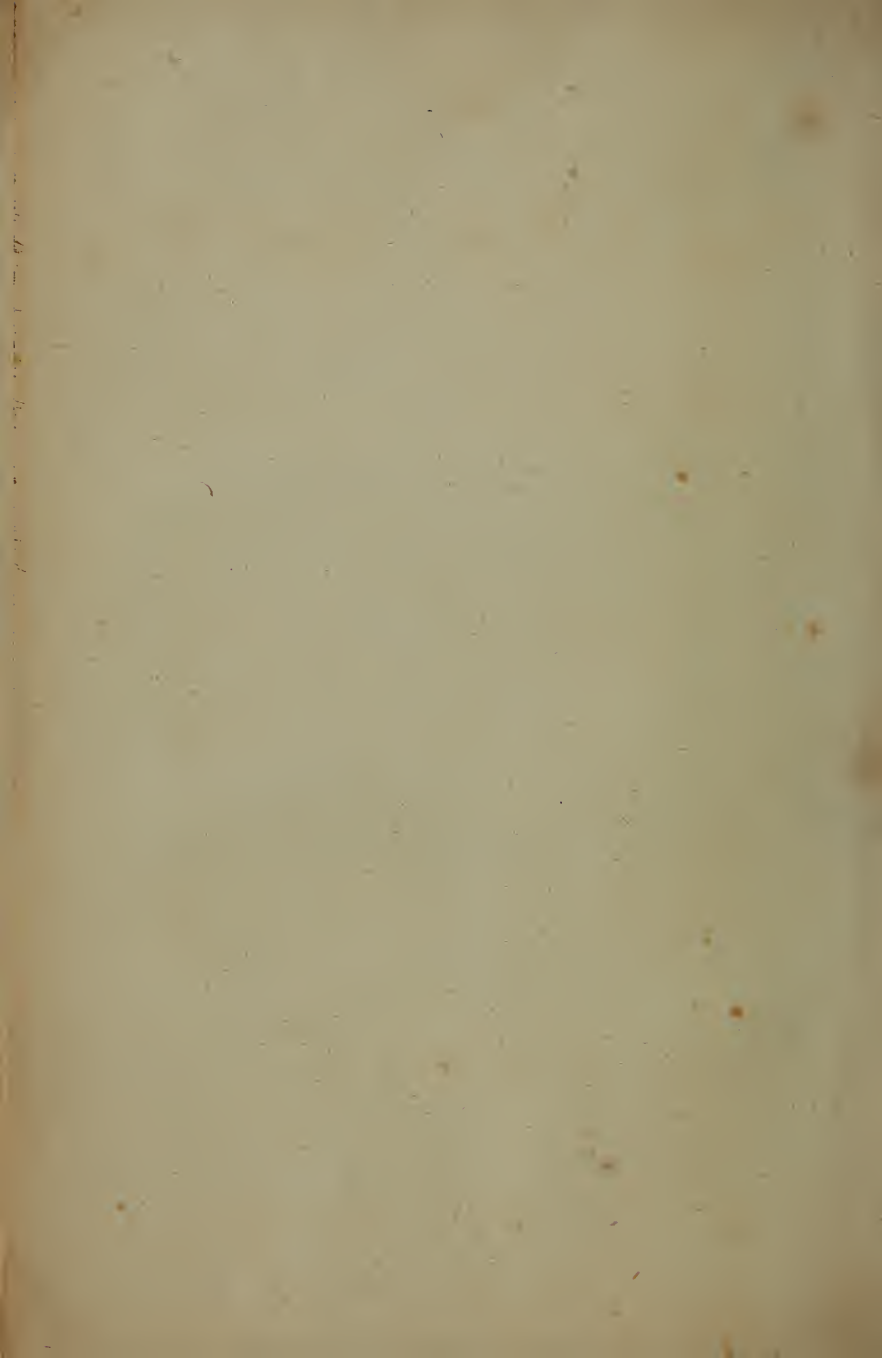
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

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"WHEN THE GAY SEASON COMES ON I SHALL BE IN A CONSTANT
WHIRL OF EXCITEMENT."—PAGE 53.

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CHRISTIAN PEACE:

Recd at D. of S. April 20. 1849

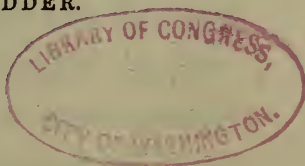
OR,

THE THIRD FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT.

ILLUSTRATED

BY SCENES FROM REAL LIFE.

EDITED BY D. P. KIDDER.



New-York: 18

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PREFACE.

WHO that has rested with a firm, unyielding faith, upon *love* as the *first* fruit of the Spirit, the strongest, the most infallible evidence of a renewed life—that has yielded to the ecstatic emotions of *joy*, the *second* and consequent fruit of the Spirit, growing out of faith in this first and best evidence—that has not felt the heart drawn by an almost imperceptible influence to a test secure from the turmoils of outward life, and to which, as a covert, the “righteous run and are saved?”

There is nothing casual or uncertain in this state of inward test, so

tangible to the Christian heart, and yet so indescribable in its results. It is a free bequest, a certain inheritance. It is the "secret place of the Most High," where the Christian may hide himself from the "strife of tongues:" yea, hide himself securely until the storms of earth are overpast. It is this principle—the principle of *peace*—the *third* fruit of the Spirit, that the following pages are designed to illustrate; and however imperfectly this design may be accomplished, the author sincerely hopes that all who peruse these pages may possess that peace which "passeth all understanding."

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CHRISTIAN PEACE.

CHAPTER I.

CLAY COVE—THE HOUSE BY THE SEASIDE—
THE LONE WOMAN.

THAT part of the city of P—— stretching along the eastern border of the bay, used, in years gone by, to be called “Clay Cove.” Here an almost interminable row of old houses stood up, as if appointed sentinels to the doors of the sea. The front walls of these old buildings looked frowningly down upon the black, muddy street; while those nearest the shore were slimy and green as the waves that day and night watered them with briny spray. A short street led from this dreary cove to one of the most pleasant portions of the city. Thus the rule by which all earthly things are measured was not wanting here. Never shall mortals be able to separate the

lights and shades so closely blended in the picture of human life. Proud, aspiring wealth; toiling, fainting poverty; radiant, dancing joy; drooping, tearful grief; sparkling hope, and dim-eyed despair—these all walk side by side toward that shoreless sea from whose mysterious waters no bark has ever returned.

Those who walk joyfully along life's sunny paths, know that there are myriads whose way is paved with sharp flinty rocks. But what is that to them? They say, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

It was a cold evening in December, if *evening* it could be called; for as yet the stars were not out upon the winter sky, though here and there a street lamp faintly struggled with the dull gray twilight. Now and then a sharp, quiet step, crackled along the icy streets, and a shrill boyish laugh rang out upon the frosty air. On the summit of a gentle slope, not far from the place before described, with its doors still open, stood an old brick school-house. Here, on the evening of which we write, might have been seen a little boy, now

coasting rapidly down the glassy hill, then patiently drawing his sled up in a circuitous path, ever pausing, as he gained the summit, to gaze wishfully at the windows of the old school-house, over which King Frost was already weaving his fantastic curtains.

At length there was a noise within, and the little fellow ran eagerly to the door. "Have you learned your lesson, Jimmy?" he inquired, laying his arm affectionately around the neck of a boy who, impatiently swinging his satchel, had just emerged from the house;—"have you learned your lesson, and said it all, Jimmy?"

"To be sure I have," replied the other, gruffly; "that old wretch would have kept me there all night, if I had not: but I didn't want you to wait for me; you had plenty of time to show me about my sums, as you have always done before."

"But," interposed the first, "you know my promise."

"What of that?" replied Jim, fiercely; "it is no business of his, an old—"

Here the schoolmaster appeared at the

door, a calm but determined-looking man, whose bright eye and jetty hair seemed hardly to justify the boy's appellation of *old* —. "Frank," said he, addressing the boy with the sled, "go home now and get your supper; be careful that you utter no falsehood to shield your cousin from merited blame; obtain leave from your uncle, and come to my rooms to-night. I have something to say to you." So saying, he turned the ponderous key of the school-house door, and wrapping his cloak around him, walked rapidly away.

Frank and James turned an opposite direction, the latter walking moodily along; only, once or twice, as an unlucky dog crossed his way, a heavy blow from his satchel of books, and a sharp yell from the poor cur, would vary the scene.

"Take care of your *understanding* here," said Frank, as they turned up an ascending street, where pavement and sidewalk were alike encased in one broad sheet of ice.

"My understanding is not altogether in

my *heels*," growled Jim; "you had better look to your own."

Just then a small boy turned the corner, walking carefully along, and carrying a large bundle in his arms. As they approached nearer, Frank perceived that the little fellow was lame. James took no note of this, and, it would seem, none of the boy himself; for he turned not an inch from his way, but rudely knocking the bundle with his books, sent it rolling down the slippery walk: at last it approached the edge, and with a few rapid bounds went down a bank of several feet.

"See what you've done, sir!" roared the lame boy.

"Never mind," interposed Frank; "I will get it for you;" and in a moment he was on his sled and at the foot of the bank.

"You can't slide up hill," laughed Jim; "your *understanding* will be of use to you now, that is if you have enough."

"If he has half as much understanding as you have impudence," retorted the lame boy, "he could climb to the moon."

“What is that, you little rascal?” said Jim, seizing him by the collar.

“Jim! Jim!” shouted Frank, scrambling rapidly up the bank,—“be more of a man than to hurt a lame boy.”

“A man!” said the little fellow, struggling fiercely; “you don’t call him a *man*: he’ll never be one, if he lives a thousand years.”

Frank, after a desperate effort, gained the walk, and laying the bundle on the sled hastened to separate the angry boys. “There’s for ye!” yelled Jim, and the poor boy was stretched upon the ground.

“Are you hurt?” inquired Frank, now left alone with the little fellow, who was trying hard to regain his feet.

“Not much, I think,” said he; “but I am afraid it will take me a long time to get home.”

Frank brought up the sled, and placed him upon it with the bundle in his lap; and then, without listening to the little boy, whirled down the street like an arrow. “What is your name?” said Frank, pausing at last to take breath.

"Abel," said the lame boy; "Abel Austin."

"Well," replied Frank, "if Jim had been *Cain*, and killed you outright, I should not have had this fun."

"Guess he'd had a tougher time than the other Cain had," and the little boy clenched his fist; "if I am lame, I'm another sort of an Abel than to lie down and die just because a body wants to kill me. He should have had a mark to carry as long as the other Cain did, only I'd been the one to give it."

"Perhaps," replied Frank, seriously, "the other *Abel* thought it wrong to fight, and had rather die than do wrong. But where do you live?"

"Down to the Cove," replied Abel; "and I can walk the rest of the way."

Frank had half a mind to let him walk; for it must be confessed, that the Cove was not a place of high repute. Was the city disturbed at midnight by the shouts of angry disputants, or the shrill cry of murder, the watchmen, as a matter of course, turned their faces toward the Cove. *Among* the

people of better habits, but not *of* them, the inhabitants of this gloomy place seemed almost shut out from human sympathy. None paused to inquire if a pure spirit was doomed to dwell there, with those of fiendish mold. It was enough for the dwellers on broad, clean streets, and in spacious, genteel houses, that no such fate was theirs.

"I can walk," said Abel, guessing the reason of Frank's sudden pause. "I can walk," said he, somewhat sneeringly; "I am not afraid that anybody at the *Cove* will knock down a lame boy—nobody that *lives* there: and the M—— street boys would not risk their heads in that quarter after dark."

"I live on M—— street," said Frank; "and to show you that I am not afraid of my head, I will carry you all the way home." Away darted the sled, and was soon gliding along in the dark shadows of the old buildings upon the seashore.

"I live in the house that stands alone, away down the *Cove*," shouted Abel.

"There is no light here," said Frank,

pausing before the building last mentioned, and wiping the perspiration from his brow.

"We live on the back side," replied the boy, trying to rise from his seat.

"Then take hold of me," said Frank; and, opening the old creaking door, they entered the house.

The inside wore the appearance of having been once divided into apartments; but the partition walls were now broken down, and one vast dreary room, dimly lighted by the moonbeams that struggled through the broken windows, revealed its nakedness and desolation. The hoarse bellowing of the sea, which drove its spray against the shattered walls, gave a fearful character to this utter dreariness. In the middle of this spacious apartment a long flight of stairs, apparently unsupported by pillar or beam, rose up like a pyramid.

"This is our way," said Abel, planting his foot upon the lower stair. Supporting the boy with one arm, and the bundle with the other, Frank prepared to ascend.

"Mother!" shouted Abel.

There was a distant sound like an opening door, and a flickering light glimmered along the dark passage. Frank almost lost his hold in the sudden tremor that shook his frame; for a face, pale as the sheeted dead, now peered at them from the landing above.

"Lower your light, mother," said the lame boy.

The shadowy arm was now stretched at full length, and in a moment more the boys were following the spectre-like figure, as it glided through the dark, broken passage, to an inner door. The room into which they entered, was in perfect keeping with the dreariness and desolation of the building in general. The little tin lamp, now placed on a rickety stand, threw out a small circle of light, within which the three had clustered. Beyond this, all was darkness; and, to the excited imagination of Frank, there seemed space sufficient for an armed banditti.

As yet the pale woman had not spoken. Her boy pressed close to her side, and in glowing colors painted the adventures of

the evening. There was no change in the fixed, vacant stare, with which she regarded him; excepting now and then, as the little fellow would let fall a profane oath, or half whisper a bitter curse, a more ghastly paleness would overspread her face, and she would point with her bony fingers to an old Bible that lay on a tottering shelf. At last Abel threw his arms around her neck, and pointing to Frank, told her how he had interfered for him, and brought him home, the whole long way, on his sled. For a moment she seemed to comprehend his meaning, and turned to Frank with a ghastly smile, that sent the blood coldly through his veins; then rising, she laid her thin hand upon his head, and tried to utter some word of thanks, but it died upon her lips. As he rose to depart, she affectionately stroked his brown hair, and raising the little lamp, guided him through the dreary passage to the stairs. "Will you come and see us again?" said Abel, who was limping along, and holding on by his mother's dress.

"I cannot," thought Frank; but as he

looked once more upon that ghastly mother, and the poor little boy, his kind heart triumphed, and he promised that he would.

CHAPTER II.

SCENES IN INDIA—THE ORPHAN BOY—THE
MOTHER'S GRAVE—THE NEW HOME.

“Uprising from the orange leaves
The tall pagoda's turrets glow;
O'er graceful shaft and fretted eaves
Its verdant web the myrtle weaves,
And hangs in flow'ring wreaths below;
And where the cluster'd palms eclipse
The moonbeams, from its marble lips
The fountain's silver waters flow.”

THE passers by who looked upon Frank that night as he whirled through the glassy streets, would have called him a bold-hearted, perhaps a reckless, boy. But it was by no means so. The heart that beat in that little frame was one of finest mold; indeed, too much so for our iron Yankee land. The earliest recollections of the little boy were of the green jungle, where the clinging vine and wild reed wove their

curious braid—of blossoms that did not close their leaves as the moonbeams fell from an Indian sky. Little Franky remembered the clustered palms and soft bowers where the Indian rose, the snowy myrtle, and the crimson ceiba, bloomed in beautiful contrast; and, more than this, he remembered a sweet reed-like voice, more melodious to his ear than the bulbal's note—it was his mother's song; and for many a long month he had gone to sleep with a sigh quivering upon his lip, and a tear stealing down his cheek, because that sweet melody would fall upon his ear no more. Frank's mother was dead. Had she lived, the little boy might have grown to manhood, and dreamed away his life beneath the sunny skies of India. But God had willed it otherwise; and even in this world we are compelled to own that his will is good.

The poet Gray has beautifully said, that

“Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.”

But if a pearl is thrown up from the ocean's bed, the finder blesses the storm wind that lodged it there ; and if the earthquake opens the mountain mine, and shows the beautiful gems that have laid dim for ages in its dark caves, who turns from the treasure to deplore the means of its discovery ? not, certainly, the *owners* of a wealth so vast. Why, then, do we weep over the sad ruins of earthly hopes, when they fill the winding-sheet of the immortal winds ? Why do we deplore the storm winds that force us from our soft, sunny covert ; that compel us to grapple them in their fury, or allow them to go over our heads ? What should we know of the might and worth of this priceless treasure which God has given us, if it were not *fretted* and *rubbed*—yea, *scoured*—by affliction into its native brightness ?

But the time had not, as yet, come for Frank to read the interpretation which God, in his mercy, gives to all his providences. He only knew that a dark cloud had come over his childhood's beautiful dreams. His memory dwelt painfully,

mysteriously, upon a tall, stern man, whom he feared vastly more than he loved, but whom he called by the fond name of father. Now he was gone, but not to the grave; he was sure of that. He well remembered the stern rebuke with which his whispered inquiries had been met; and he knew that human hearts would not forbid him to speak of the dead—no, even in his harsh, cold uncle's eye, he had seen a tear at the mention of his mother's name. "Yes, she is dead!" Frank would often say; "I know that she is dead." He could say, with Cowper,—

"I heard the bell toll on thy burial-day,
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
And, turning from my nursery window, drew
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu."

There are but few tones in this discordant world so sweet to childhood's ear as those of the mother; few hearts does the little one find to throb with his own, to bear its griefs and carry its sorrows, like the mother's heart. Of little Frank, this was particularly true. On the death of his mother, the little boy had been transferred

to his uncle's family, becoming a dependent on the charity of a man whom his mother had deeply offended; and by whom, though an only sister, she had been left in loneliness and sorrow to mourn over the wreck of youthful hopes, and to sink at last into an early grave. It is true that in his case there had been heart relentings. Some natural tears had fallen in the view of his unnatural neglect; but the quiet dead can well dispense with tears from those who helped to heap the cold sod upon the broken heart. Ye who have added bitterness to life's cup of wormwood—who could not spare for the wounded heart the balm of a gentle word, or a cheering smile—come not near that heart when it has ceased to beat! insult not the dead with your miserable tears!

Poor Frank ever shrank from communion with his uncle, and it was rather a pleasant thing to him that it was seldom granted. To his aunt he would have turned with all the yearning tenderness of a loving heart; but even this was denied him. She had a boy of her own—(shame

on a woman's heart that has no place for the little ones *not* her own)—James, who has been already introduced to the reader, that same idle boy that was kept at the school-house till after dark—that same sullen boy who felt no gratitude toward the little cousin who waited patiently in the cold and snow, because he would not go home without him—that same cruel boy who knocked down the little lame fellow on M—— street, and left Frank to carry him home alone—that was the boy that his mother shut up in her heart so close that no other little boy or girl could find an entrance there.

It so happened that Frank loved this boy simply because he had just the kind of heart that must love something; and so he had come to take it as a matter of course that he was to do everything that Jim wished him to do—to perform all his labor out of school, to get all his lessons in; to bear all the blame of his misdemeanors; and, worse than all, to tell falsehoods in order to screen him from punishment. But a warm and faithful friend

had been raised up for this poor boy in the person of his teacher. He had seen with pain the native indolence of his character which sought repose even at the expense of conscience.

“Anything for the sake of peace,” was a favorite expression with little Frank; and up to the time of his acquaintance with Mr. Boyden, his teacher, he had acted on this principle. By a close examination of his character, Mr. Boyden felt assured that Frank’s indolence extended to nothing but *moral* action. He shrank from a frown or a harsh word; he had not learned to fear God more than man. It cannot be said that Frank loved his teacher—he *feared* him exceedingly; for Mr. Boyden, like a skillful physician, had probed the wound which he was resolved to heal: and it was for this very purpose that he had invited Frank to his room, on the evening of which we write. The moon was high in the heavens when the little boy turned up C——t street, carefully reading the numbers from door to door, till he came to the one he sought; then, with a somewhat

slow and reluctant step he ascended the broad staircase, and tapped lightly at the nearest door. It was opened by the teacher, who, with more kindness than usual in his manner, bade him enter.

CHAPTER III.

THE FAITHFUL FRIENDS—THE WAY OF PEACE —THE NEW RESOLVE.

And peace is here ; and hope and love
Are round us, like a mantle, thrown ;
And unto Thee, supreme above,
The knee of prayer is bow'd alone.

“Sit down by me,” said Mr. Boyden, placing a seat near his own. “I have some questions to ask you, Frank ; and you may be assured that much more than you are aware depends on the truthfulness of your answers.”

A deep glow overspread the little boy's cheek ; and there was something like a flash of anger in his dark eye. The teacher saw this, and hailed the indications with joy. It was the waking up of a moral power, which he felt more and

more convinced was not wanting in Frank's character, but only lying dormant.

Mr. Boyden. Will you answer me one question truly ?

"I will, sir," replied Frank ; and for the first time in his life he turned a calm and steady look upon his teacher.

Mr. Boyden. Will you tell me who was the author of that composition handed in by your cousin James, and purporting to be his ?

Frank. I was the author, sir. I have always written his compositions.

Mr. Boyden. And yet you allowed it to pass, knowing it to be a falsehood, and knowing, too, that you were doing an injustice to other members of the school.

Frank. I have done injustice to no one but myself, sir.

Mr. Boyden. It will be easy to show that you have. Two prizes are to be awarded by the committee of examination for the two best compositions. The one written for your cousin James will be pronounced the best ; if you could write *that*, you can also write the next best, and by that means

secure both prizes: one—and probably the greatest—for the idle, ill-tempered James; the other for yourself.

Frank. I have no intention of wronging others, sir. I know very well who deserves a prize, and I shall take care that Charles Watson does not lose one by me.

Mr. Boyden. But why should you wrong yourself by treacherously obtaining a prize for the undeserving?

Frank. It is only for the sake of peace, sir. My uncle has taken it into his head that James is the worst boy in P——d. I am sure that the house would not hold aunt and I both, if I did not manage every way to make him think differently.

Mr. Boyden. Do you read your Bible, Frank?

Frank. Yes, sir.

Mr. Boyden. Do you remember that it says “there is no peace to the wicked?”

Frank. Yes, sir.

Mr. Boyden. And do you remember anything that is there said about lying lips and a false tongue?

Frank. Yes, sir.

Mr. Boyden. What kind of peace, then, do you obtain by uttering falsehood? Is it that of a good conscience?

Frank. I cannot say, sir, though I wrong myself much for the sake of peace, that I ever find it; especially, sir, since I have attended your school. I cannot bear that you should think and speak of me as a liar. I am sure that I never intended to be one. To my own dear mother I was not afraid to speak the truth; but, somehow, since I came here, nobody smiles on me excepting when I tell a lie.

Mr. Boyden. Well, my dear boy, remember one thing—whoever smiles at falsehood, God frowns: the peace which such smiles may give you is only momentary; the misery which will follow his frown is lasting as eternity. The peace of a good conscience, my boy, has sometimes cost the entire wreck of earthly peace; but, if it must be so, if doing right costs us everything, we shall find at last that we have gained all.

Frank. O sir, if I only had the courage!

I begin to despise myself for being what I am.

Mr. Boyden. There is hope in that ; you can do no one any good by wronging yourself. Begin from this moment to be true—true to yourself, to your fellows, and your God ; do this, and his peace will be yours.

Frank. But, dear Mr. Boyden, will you tell me how I shall manage with my aunt and cousin James ?

Mr. Boyden. You need not try to manage with them at all. The most important thing for you to manage, Frank, is your own conscience. Be more careful of *that* than of anything else ; see that it is never wounded. However much your heart may ache, and your feelings may be wounded, see that your conscience is unharmed ; never fear the storms that may howl around you, if your heart has peace. Jesus was in the hinder part of the vessel, asleep. When the faithless disciples, in an agony of terror, saw nothing save their sinking ship and the maddened waves, Jesus, the Saviour of the world, was at peace : and

he has promised his peace to those who love and follow him. Be a Christian, my dear boy, and the peace of Christ will be yours.

CHAPTER IV.

UNJUST REWARD—TRIALS OF LITTLE FRANK
—INJUDICIOUS MOTHER—UNFAITHFUL FATHER—SONG FOR THE DEAD.

“Brighter waters sparkled never
In that magic well,
Of whose gift of life for ever
Ancient legends tell :
In the lonely desert wasted,
And by mortal lip untasted.”

“BE true! be true!” murmured Frank, as once more he found himself in the open air. He looked up to the clear blue sky, with its countless stars, and he saw the bright full moon pursuing her nightly round. A new light seemed to be springing up within him. Did it fall upon his spirit from the beautiful orbs that shone so gloriously from the evening sky? No; it was the immortal soul burning with new and beautiful thoughts of freedom, of purity, and peace.

It was the next evening after the examination of Mr. Boyden's school, where, with a feeling of bitter self-accusation, Frank saw his idle cousin bear off the prize for which the good and industrious had vainly striven—for the teacher, though acquainted with the whole circumstance, allowed the prizes to be awarded as the committee pleased; intending, at some future time, to turn the whole to a good account. It was the next evening, and Frank was alone. "I have gained that prize for him," thought he, "and what has been my reward? It was all for peace, but what peace have I gained, either for others or myself? Aunt is so much afraid that uncle will find out the deception—that James did not earn the prize he has won—that she has not even thanked me for doing as she wished. Jim, whatever else he may be, is not a liar; and he seems to despise his mother and me for this fraud, though it was all for his sake. And now I am done!"

Here Frank rose up, and stood at full length. "People may smile or frown; they may love or hate; they may call me

a disobliging little elf, and wish me to the north pole, if they please ; from this evening I will be *true*, I will think no more of my mother's gentle voice and tender words, for that will make me weak again. I shall do some mean thing to gain a smile, or hear a word like hers ; but I shall never hear it. Mother is in heaven now. She has left me her Bible, I will do as that teaches me, and meet her there.

Frank's new resolutions were put to an immediate test, for just at that moment his uncle entered the room. The little boy began to gather up his books. He never felt comfortable in his uncle's presence ; perhaps it was an intuitive feeling (always strong in childhood) that he was not liked. In a degree, at least, this was true. John Melville never saw the boy without thinking of the father, whom he had always abhorred, and of the mother whom he had suffered to die alone. Unrepented wrong always seeks self-justification. He had determined to take care of the child because it was his sister's ; but he did not like him, that was certain. He was a quiet,

docile boy ; but then he liked him rather the less for that. He fancied that there was a cringing obsequiousness in his character, which he knew did not belong to his family ; which he knew was not a characteristic of his sister ; and, therefore, must have come from the hated father. Mrs. Melville had always disliked Frank, though she understood his character much better than did her husband. She had never wanted any child near her but her own ; and with the feelings of an artful, selfish woman, had ever sought to imbitter Mr. Melville against the child. " Such a little liar," she would say to her husband, and indeed to all her associates ; " such a little liar I have never seen. India must be a dreadful place for children."

But there is an Eye that searches all hearts. That eye turned its broad gaze upon the deceitful Mrs. M., and upon the young, frost-bitten spirit of little Frank ; and it saw, at a single glance, the poison that was distilling there. A judge of the fatherless is God in his holy habitation, and it was his good providence which

raised up for little Frank a friend in his time of need.

But to return to Mr. Melville. He saw that Frank was preparing to leave the room, and in a cold, authoritative tone, desired him to remain. The little boy resumed his seat. "It seems strange to me," said Mr. Melville, "that, with all your study, you came off so poorly at the examination. Will you allow me to look at that paper which you have just folded?"

Frank hesitated: the truth was, the little boy, as a kind of solace to his loneliness, had acquired a habit of writing verses, and he thought as most young people of really poetic talent do, that it was something to be ashamed of. Mr. Melville, with all his coldness and austerity of manner, was a profound admirer of genuine poetry; it always reached his heart, and thrilled upon chords there, which he was glad to know were not hushed for ever. Whether the lines reluctantly handed to his uncle were *genuine* poetry, the reader must judge. Perhaps it was only the *subject* which stirred the deep fountains of his heart, and

sent its bright overflow to the eye: be that as it may, the stern Mr. Melville wept as he read the following lines from the pen of little Frank :—

MY MOTHER'S GRAVE.

My mother sleeps beneath the palm,
And on her grave to-night
The fragrant dew distills its balm,
The pale moon pours her light;
And round her stone the myrtle leaves
A snowy garland softly weaves.

Ah! were it mine to trace the spot
My young heart loved so well,
What thoughts I once regarded not
Would in my bosom swell:
The wings that ever wave unseen
Are not of fancy's idle dream.

The hopes that ever brightest bloom
Are shortest in their stay;
They tarry but the wing to plume,
And then to pass away,
That we may view each lovely thing,
As wafted by an unseen wing.

Sleep, mother, sleep beneath the palm—
The myrtle blooms for thee,
And for thy grave, the moonbeams calm
Steal through the dark-leaved tree,
Heed not the tears thy son has shed,
Sleep, gentle mother, with the dead.

“Frank,” said Mr. Melville, in a kinder tone than he had ever before addressed to the little boy, “I fear that you are not happy with us; you, no doubt, find James a very troublesome companion.”

“Yes, sir,” replied Frank, promptly; “I have thus far allowed him to trouble me a great deal.”

Mr. Melville looked up with surprise for a moment. He regarded the little boy in silence, then resumed the conversation.

Mr. Melville. I have found it impossible to come at James’s real character. From his appearance at home, I have judged that he was everywhere an idle, quarrelsome boy; but he acquits himself well at the examinations. I do not intend to compel you to any unpleasant confessions, Frank; but I begin to feel that I ought to look into the matter. I have neglected it too long, but it has been for the sake of peace.

Frank. I begin to think, sir, that the only way to secure genuine peace is to do right. I have made myself contemptible—deceived you, and wronged Jim—for the sake of peace; but I am now sure that

peace flows in quite another channel. You will pardon me, sir, if I say that it would have been much better for James and for us all, if you had taught us how to secure the peace of a good conscience.

Mr. M. was silent. "I have mistaken this boy," thought he. But whether he was pleased or otherwise with this discovery, it would have been difficult to tell: be this as it may, he suddenly dropped the conversation, and told Frank that he could now retire.

CHAPTER V.

THE TRUSTING BOY—THE CHRISTIAN MOTHER
—THE POOR AND SICK—NO PEACE TO THE
WICKED.

"I AM glad that you are come to spend the evening with me," said Charley Watson to Frank; "my mother has gone to take care of a poor sick woman to-night, and I am all alone."

"And do you and your mother always live alone?" inquired Frank.

"Yes," said Charley, "always now: but

once we had a father to live with us, and a kind brother older than me, and two little sisters ; but they are all dead. We lived in the country then ; a beautiful place, where the broad fields in summer time, when the wind swept over the grass, looked like the wide, green sea. Sammy and Susan, and Mary and I, used to play so happily in the shadow of the old elm-tree, before little Mary was laid there ; for when she died, father was very feeble, and some of the neighbors thought he was growing childish, because he couldn't bear to have Mary carried to the church-yard. That dear little grave, Frank ; it spoiled our play-ground : but, then, it helped us in another way ; for sometimes before that, we used to quarrel—no, not exactly *quarrel*, but dispute—and say harsh things to each other, but after our sweet sister was laid in the shadow of the old elm, we seemed to hear her voice in every breeze that crept through its waving boughs, and stirred its dark green leaves, and it seemed always to say to us, as Jesus said to the angry waves, ' Peace ! be still ! ' Then father

died, and Samuel was killed by a loaded cart which passed over him, and crushed him to death : those were sad days for us, Frank. If Sammy had lived, we could have kept the farm ; for he was our eldest, and a fine smart boy he was too. Poor mother ! everybody thought that so much sorrow would kill her ; but she said that there was One who would never leave nor forsake her. My mother is a Christian, Frank. Susan came with us to the city after the farm was sold ; but she pined for the green fields and sweet country air, and she would lie awake through the live-long night, thinking of her father, and Samuel, and Mary ; till at last she went into a consumption, and died. Now mother and I live alone ; but we are very happy."

"And yet," said Frank, glancing round the scantily furnished room, and contrasting it with the splendidly furnished apartments at his uncle's, "your mother is poor, Charley ; is she not ?"

"I don't know," replied the little boy ; "we have enough, and mother says that this is more than the Saviour had. Our

house is snug and warm ; but Jesus had no home. We lie down at night on comfortable beds, and sleep peacefully, but the Son of man had not where to lay his head. Mother says it is no matter what we lose in this world, if we do not lose his favor and our peace of conscience ; for that is a loss which no earthly good can supply."

"But are you not afraid to stay here through the night alone?"

"No ; I try to do right, Frank : and mother says that the good have nothing to fear. She does not often leave me alone ; but to-night a little boy came to the door with a note, which mother read, and which seemed to surprise her much. She told me that it was from a lady whom she had known many years ago ; that she was now sick, and wanted to see her."

Just then there was a knock at the door, which Charley opened, and, to Frank's astonishment, the little lame boy entered the room.

"This is the sick woman's son," said Charley.

"I know him," replied Frank ; "I know

him very well. But, tell me, Abel, is your mother very sick?"

"O very, very," and the little fellow brushed a tear from his eye. "Poor mother was very strange the night on which you carried me home. She has been often so of late—whole days, when it would seem as if she couldn't speak; but, for a week past, she has cried nearly all the time, and has been growing sicker and sicker every day. But last night, how she frightened me! I was trying to light the lamp, but it wouldn't burn; and at last I got out of patience, and swore. O, boys, I wish you could have seen my mother! She started from the bed, and caught my arm; the moonbeams came into the window, and fell upon her ghastly face; and her eyes! O how I wish that I could forget their look! 'Boy!' said she, 'look there!' She was pointing out upon the foaming sea. I thought that she was mad, Frank; so I put my arms around her neck, and begged her to lie down, telling her that there was nothing there: but she held me fast, and drew close to the window. 'Do you see,'

said she, 'how the waves fret and dash against the iron shore? how they leap from the ocean-bed, and boil as if tortured with unseen fires? Remember! remember! that thus shall it ever be with the wicked. Like the troubled sea, whose waters cast up mire and dirt—no peace—no peace to the wicked!' Then she fell upon her knees, and lifted up her pale hands, 'O God!' said she, 'save my boy. I ask nothing for myself, for that were vain; but save my child.' You don't know," continued little Abel, "how I felt—how I begged her to go to bed, and promised that I never, never would swear again; and after awhile she consented, and I laid down beside her, but not to sleep. Through the whole night I couldn't close my eyes; and I cried all day, and begged her to let me go for somebody to take care of her. At last she said that there was a lady in the city who was once her friend, but she dared not send for her: then I got pen, ink, and paper, and went down on my knees for a whole hour entreating her to write. O how glad was I when I took that blotted little note! but

gladder still, when I found dear Mrs. Watson all ready to go and see my poor sick mother. But," continued Abel, turning to Charley, "I should have done my errand before. Your mother wants you to bring the basket which she left on the table, and the box in which she keeps her papers. She would like, too, to have us bring as many blankets as we can."

"I will help you," said Frank; and the little boys started together for the Cove.

It was a cold dismal night without, but not less so within, that dreary old house. There was an unwonted solemnity in the hollow voice of the waves as they came booming up, driven by the fitful night wind. Charley and Frank clung together as they entered that vast but desolate room. It is true that there was something more of comfort apparent than when Frank visited them; for a fire was burning in the rusty grate, and the bed on which the sick woman lay was drawn close to its cheering light. The warm blankets which the boys had brought, were soon hung carefully around the bed so as to exclude the damp,

chilly wind, that forced itself through a thousand crevices. Warm cordials were taken from the basket, and administered to the fainting sick woman. But, better than all, sweet sympathizing tones, such as she had heard in other days, fell upon her dying ear.

It was nearly midnight. Mrs. Watson had allowed the boys to remain, for she felt that death was near; and even her heart, staid as it was upon God, shrank from meeting him alone in a place like this. Mrs. Watson had drawn her chair nearer the fire, for the night was intensely cold; Charley and Abel, wrapped in a blanket, had fallen asleep; but Frank, though invited to do the same, preferred to share the night watch with Mrs. Watson. "I have not before thought of it," whispered the good woman; "but your friends, my dear, wont they be anxious about you?"

"My uncle is away from home," replied Frank, "and aunt" — Here the little boy paused; the bitter consciousness that he was unloved, and uncared for, came over

him with heart-sickening force. The tears came to his eyes, and stole out unbidden upon his cheek. The kind, sympathizing Mrs. Watson, laid her arm gently around his neck, and drew him nearer to her side. She knew something of his history, for she had often heard Charley speak of his little school-fellow. She knew that he was motherless, and those tears appealed to her heart.

“I hope, my dear, that you are not unhappy,” said she.

“No,” replied Frank; “I am not really unhappy, but somehow your voice makes me think of mother.” He stopped, wiped the tears from his eyes, and, turning a bright look upon Mrs. Watson, inquired if good people were ever unhappy.

“No, my dear,” replied Mrs. W.; “they may be afflicted, sorrowful, cast down, tossed upon the stormy sea of life, but the good have a heritage of which they cannot be robbed—this heritage is *peace*. However rude the storm that may beat upon them, the Christian (and no one else can be really *good*) hears the voice which

says, 'Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid; peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.'"
Here a deep sigh from the sick woman interrupted their conversation.

"Can I do anything for you?" tenderly inquired Mrs. Watson, leaning over the bed.

"No, no, it is too late," gasped the poor sufferer; then partially raising herself in bed, she grasped the hand of her friend. "Time was," she exclaimed, in a hollow voice; "time was when you sought to help me: but your help was spurned; had it not been, I might not have perished for ever. O, Martha, Martha! for the last dreadful week I have done nothing but read those faithful letters of yours. Would to God that I had listened to their earnest entreaties! But it is now too late."

"Say not so, dear Emily," replied Mrs. W. in a soothing tone; "there is hope, there is mercy for you; look up, and claim what is so freely offered."

"Martha!" (and the sick woman glared

wildly upon her weeping friend,) "hear me! Six long years have I bowed in agony before God, and felt that it was in vain. There were days—ah! they might have been *glorious* days, precious seed-times for a priceless harvest—days, when peace, poised on snowy wing, waited long an entrance here." Her pale hand fell heavily upon her throbbing breast; for a moment she was silent, and then resumed: "Martha! I knew the very hour when the dove, wearied with its long watching, plumed its wing for an everlasting flight; when this poor spirit, lashed by the storms of human passion, was left for ever in its darkness—for ever to foam and beat, with no Saviour upon its troubled waters. But, Martha, have those letters come?"

"They have," replied Mrs. Watson; "but do not request me to read them. You have not time to waste in contemplating the past; I entreat you to turn your eyes toward the endless future."

"Read to me," she exclaimed, with energy; "read to me those dark records

of my folly; read to me *your* letters, too, that I may know if there is hope. I entreat you, read me all!"

Thus importuned, Mrs. Watson sat down with a package of letters beside the bed. Breathing a fervent prayer for the despairing woman, she drew one from the package. "This," said she, "is your first letter to me after you left home." The sick woman sighed deeply, turned a pale face toward her friend, and listened with fixed attention.

EMILY TO MARTHA.

MY DEAR MARTHA,—I am here at last; here in the gay, busy city of B——, mingling with congenial spirits. Last evening my aunt gave a splendid party. It was solely on my account. You will not wonder, then, at the anxiety which mingled with my preparations. Had the fate of empires been suspended on my appearance that evening no greater solicitude could have been felt. Aunt said nothing; but I knew that she was exceedingly afraid that something "gauche" and coun-

try-like would appear in my manners. I would rather have died than she should not have been disappointed; and I know, dear Martha, little as you care for such things, you would have been perfectly delighted with my success. Thanks to my dear aunt, my dress was costly enough—*recherche* and exceedingly becoming. It was that, I verily believe, which inspired me; for the moment I entered the drawing-room and saw myself so elegantly attired, I quite lost my own identity. The brilliant figure reflected from the glowing mirrors bore no more resemblance to the little country girl than the queen of France to the daughter of a cow-herd. I soon became the centre of an admiring throng. Whenever aunt caught my eye, she gave me such a look of triumph as assured me that she was both astonished and delighted with my ease and vivacity. She has since told me that had I mingled with such circles all my lifetime, I could not have enacted “the belle” more perfectly.

So much for myself. And now a few things confidentially. I thought it rather

strange that aunt—who, I understand, has never hardly condescended to notice father and his family since he lost his property, and became a poor farmer in the country, instead of a wealthy merchant in the city—should so suddenly have taken a notion to send for me; to lavish so much expense on a poor relation, and introduce me to the high circles in which she moves. But I begin to understand it all. Aunt is not on the best terms with her husband. It seems that he has taken under his protection the son and daughter, orphan children, of an only brother. The young gentleman is fine-looking, proud as a sultan, and hates my aunt so profoundly that he wont stay in the house. Uncle, thinking no doubt that he has just reason for this, has placed him in a counting house, allowing him to board where he pleases. The sister is an angelic creature, gentle and beautiful as the morning; but I cannot say that I really like her, she has such a way of looking with her clear blue eyes, not at your face or your dress merely, but as if she were looking down to the depths of your heart.

She seems to care but little about dress and display; but aunt says that it is only because she thinks herself so thoroughly a lady that she need borrow nothing from art—that she knows herself beautiful, and employs seeming negligence for effect. But I don't believe that. She seems melancholy, does not appear to be much of a favorite with the gay throng; and yet aunt says that she always manages to secure the most intelligent part of the company. If so, she is very artful, for I never saw less *appearance* of management in any one.

I remember your parting request, dear Martha: "Write and tell me if you are happy." I cannot say that I am really; but then I expect to be. When the gay season comes on, I shall be in a constant whirl of excitement. I shall then forget everything but pleasure—at least for a time. Now, being neither in the world nor out of it, a thousand things annoy me. Uncle don't like me; and I don't think that aunt would care a fig for my attractions, if it were not for carrying some ends of her own: and then the pensive, beautiful Eloisa, I shall

hate her soon because she makes me despise myself. Added to all this, I think of home, my poor sick father, what a look he gave me the morning I came away. But mother said that he ought not to expect it of me that I should be willing to mope away my life in a sick chamber, especially after aunt's splendid offer.

I always hated Linwood. Father knows it. Such a humdrum life as I have led there: so abominably stupid—trees, and brooks, and flowers; going to church all day of a Sunday, and doing your duty all week time. I don't wonder that people are glad to die when, as the farmers say, they have "hoed their row." I want to hear from home, though I know it will give me the horrors. Tell Matilda to write. Strange that two sisters should be so unlike as Matilda and myself; but she is just the girl for the country—willing to help Kezzy milk, and mother bake, and then read an hour or two to father, or take her sewing to his bedside and hear him talk about dying. O dear! I thought it would drive me mad. Mother

says that from a child I would scream at the sight of a coffin. Be sure you write soon, and tell me all the news. News from Linwood! Ha! ha! I should as soon expect oranges from Greenland.

Yours affectionately,

EMILY.

ANSWER FROM MARTHA.

MY DEAR EMILY,—Matilda would write by the same mail with me, if it were possible; but the poor child has not a moment to spare. Yesterday afternoon your father had another attack of bleeding; it was doubtless brought on by a severe fit of coughing which lasted more than an hour. Kezzy came for me in the evening. Your mother was completely overcome with alarm and fatigue, and we persuaded her to retire, while Matilda and I took turns in watching during the night—most of us thought it would be the last one of his life. The doctor left us about midnight, but before he went away charged your father on no account to speak. He seemed very restless, turned from side to

side, and sighed deeply. I bathed his face, propped up his pillows, and told him to make some sign if he wanted anything. He immediately pointed to that portrait of yours, taken when you were a little child. I told him that I had received a letter from Emily; that she still thought of home, and her sick father, and no doubt would return immediately when she should hear of his increased illness. He closed his eyes, but I saw that a tear was struggling through. How I wished that Emily was here to wipe it away!

It was a sad night to me, rendered still more so by one little incident. Poor "Milly," whom you know is so gentle and harmless in her madness that she is allowed to go where she pleases, came under the window just before day. I doubt not but that many sick persons have been hurried to their graves by the foolish superstition so prevalent among us that death follows Milly. The moment that her voice was heard under the window, I saw that your father clasped his hands in prayer. He used to laugh at this notion; but suf-

fering has made him weak as others—I softly opened the casement, and entreated her to go away. She paid no attention to this, but pressing still nearer, she sung with wild, sweet melody, the lines commencing,—

“ Spirit, thy labor is o’er,
Thy work of probation is done ;”

then sinking her voice to a low, plaintive strain, she sung again,—

“ Say, then, how poor and little worth
Are all the glittering toys of earth
That lure us here !
Dreams of a sleep that death must break,
Alas ! before it bids us wake,
We disappear.”

I hardly dare trust myself, dear Emily, to say anything of your present mode of life. I know nothing of it. I am not fitted by nature to mingle with the gay world, and therefore I should rejoice my taste does not thus incline me. You say that you have always hated Linwood, that you have never enjoyed the quiet of its trees, and flowers, and waters. Heaven grant I may be disappointed in this ; but I have yet to be convinced that the whirl of ex-

citement, toward which you look with so much interest, will fill the vacuum always felt and acknowledged by you. I often heard you speak with contempt of the unadorned path of every-day duty; but, Emily, I fear that bitter experience will teach you that this is the only path of peace—the only path of safety; narrow, it may be—rough to the feet—but it will lead to the green pastures and beside the still waters of peace. I was much interested in your description of the gentle Eloisa. Is it possible that you can hate her? You cannot, dear Emily. Don't let such cruel thoughts lodge in your heart, much less allow them an utterance from your lips. How should we distrust the purity of that heart which fears human scrutiny! how greatly should we prize those who look beyond the surface of human character, and thus assist us to know ourselves! May our hearts be of that character, dear Emily, that we shall not dread the eye of Omniscience even, much less that of short-sighted mortals.

I cannot help hoping, dear Emily, that

you will return home for the security of your future peace, if nothing more. I hope that your poor father will during his few remaining days be blest with your society.

As ever, your sincere friend,

MARTHA.

—

EMILY TO MARTHA.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I received your mournful letter, which was in such perfect keeping with everything belonging to Linwood, that there was no mistaking the land of its nativity. It was as I predicted, your sad epistle gave me a fit of horrors. I cried, and could not be seen at dinner-time; but aunt, who had made up her mind that I should be present at Madam R.'s soiree, wrote a letter to mother. I know nothing of what it contained; but an answer was immediately received, assuring me that father was better, and when needed at home I should certainly be sent for.

The grand affair at Madam R.'s came

off with great effect on Thursday evening ; all was splendor and gayety. But that Eloisa, how she tortures me ! so calm, so self-possessed. I cannot say that there is ever contempt in her manners, but there is something to me infinitely worse—she seems to look at the waves of human passion, restless as the troubled sea, as though she marveled at the littleness of their disturbing cause. It must be affectation ; if not, why does she frequent such scenes of gayety ? There is a certain class, and I would not mind it if it were not the best, to which she is a perfect magnet. Her proud brother seems to worship her ; but I know that he is a tyrant, and compels her to do whatever he pleases. Uncle, too, who is in every respect unlike his wife, doats upon Eloisa : but he cannot make her home a desirable one.

I can't help disliking her, and I don't know why, either ; for she treats me with the most perfect politeness. Sometimes in our small select parties at home, aunt has tried to throw her into the shade, by introducing and making a powerful effort

to sustain conversation not suited to her taste ; but you might as well think of eclipsing the north-star with a gallipot. She never seems desirous of monopolizing conversation, or of making herself in any way conspicuous ; but somehow, when Eloisa speaks, all but the parrots are silent.

Once I joined aunt in an attempt to silence her, and I think rather rudely played upon some of her words. Aunt was delighted, especially as it seemed to give her pain ; but the refined and elegant manner with which she resumed the conversation with those nearest her, I am positive, secured for aunt and myself the contempt of the whole company. Fortunately for such as I, we meet with but few such in the pleasure-seeking throng. There is, however, among this few, a gentleman in whom my aunt, for some reason or other, is deeply interested ; perhaps you would like to inquire if I am too ? Not at all ; I have the same feeling of an immeasurable distance between us—the very same that renders Eloisa almost hateful to me. Hea-

ven forbid that I should ever be intimately connected with a person who has any ideas of *duty*. I can bear it very well in one merely a friend, or I should not have loved you so long.

I could not help laughing outright to hear you talk again about the green pastures and still waters of peace. I should like to know if you have ever found them. I know that you always appear happy, but then you are a bit of a philosopher in your way: you have too much dignity to acknowledge, as I do, that you have been plagued ever since you were born. "The flinty path of duty," truly! And what is to come of plodding along, way-worn and weary, in a path narrow and rugged like this? There is old Mrs. Crocker, what a nightmare feeling comes over me when I think of her: how she has always thrummed away upon the path of duty and the peace of a good conscience! Poor, foolish woman! as though future peace were to come by murdering the present. Straight forward she has gone, through flames of affliction and floods of sorrow, and what

has come of it? A poor, forsaken o a woman, when she might have been the rich and coveted. The dark and loathsome grave is to be the end of her path of duty. Perhaps you will say that heaven will be her reward; but I would like to know if heaven is only prepared for those who make themselves wretched here? if so, I would say, Live while you live. I wish you would adopt this motto, and come here, that I might see one familiar face; for I never was so near hating the whole human race as now.

Your friend, EMILY.

While Mrs. Watson read thus far, the sick woman lay, her large dark eye fixed in painful attention; but at the close of this letter, she passed her thin hand upon her forehead, exclaiming, "And what is the end of *my* path? O that the untrue, the unfaithful, might see! 'Mark the perfect man; and behold the upright; for the end of that man is *peace*.' Such is not mine."

"But it may be, dear Emily," interposed her friend. "Think that God is

love ; think of the atonement made for you."

"It is all in vain," replied the poor creature, dropping her hands with a look of unutterable despair ; "for me there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin. He has sworn in his wrath that I shall not enter into his rest." For a few moments she seemed to wander in thought, imagining herself once more in the gay scenes with which she had been conversant, then suddenly recollecting herself, she turned to her friend : "You will find," said she, "in the package containing your letters, one from Eloisa. It was written during a temporary absence from B——. In sympathy with a wicked plot, laid by my aunt, I had succeeded in making the dear girl think me her friend ; artless and unsuspecting herself, she little dreamed the true character of the interest manifested for her. You will see by her letter that she was truly desirous, and even had strong hopes, of doing me good. Please read it," said the sick woman, and Mrs. Watson complied.

ELOISA TO EMILY.

MY DEAR EMILY,—You affectionately inquire when it is my purpose to return home. I assure you, dear, that your kind letter has almost reconciled me to the thought of doing so. But I am so happy here, I have often wondered, Emily, how you could leave your sweet country home for an unprofitable town life like ours; but I suppose that the world still wears its tinsel to you,—but to me, dear Emily, it has donned a sober garb. Death was mingled with my childhood's dreams. I remember the still pale face of my mother, so mysteriously covered with the winding sheet; and how, from that hour, I began to suspect all of earth's brightness; this suspicion has ripened into certainty. The long wasting sickness that brought my poor father to his grave, was to me a faithful interpreter of earthly hopes. Through many a dreary night-watch beside the couch of pain, have I been compelled to study those lessons which the heart is slow

to learn ; but, once learned, what are they not worth ? Faith sets his bow in the cloud ; Peace is cradled upon the billow ; earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal.

It may seem strange to you, that one possessed of such feelings, with such a conviction of Pleasure's nothingness, should ever appear among her votaries. This I do, dear Emily, though I lay no offering at her shrine. My dear brother, like many others, seeks to make the world an antidote for its own woes ; he will not employ its pleasure for this, though he would compel me so to do. He has a proud contempt for the butterflies of fashion, but the heart must find an altar ; and mine has grown sick at the thought that Edgar would make his god of gold. I would win him, and all whom I love, to a higher worship. There is but one way in which I can ever bring a mind like his to an apprehension of truth. Naturally proud, overbearing, almost vindictive, my influence over him can only be secured by yielding always where conscience will permit. If my over

solicitude in this respect has ever impelled me to a disregard of the voice of conscience, I have been made immediately to feel that such a sacrifice would be useless to him, and *fatal* to me. There is a peace, dear Emily, with which the stranger intermeddleth not—so deep its current; so far from the surface of outward things, that nothing merely outward can disturb its quiet flow. But conscience sways a sceptre over these tranquil waters, and conscience wounded will raise a storm there, which nothing but the breath of a Mediator can quell.

I freely confess that I do not wish to believe what you seem to think is a fact respecting it. To me he has ever appeared far different from that. I can hardly bear the thought of his being such a hypocrite: but I shall take your advice, and be on my guard; perhaps I am to learn more fully that there is “nothing true but heaven.” I shall be with you in a few days.

Affectionately, ELOISA.

“My last letter to you,” said Mrs. Austin,

faintly, “explains in part the plot (formed by my aunt, and seconded by me) against poor Eloisa.”

EMILY TO MARTHA.

MY DEAR MARTHA,—You will excuse the seeming negligence which has allowed your letter to remain so long unanswered. Pardon me, dear, but you are so old-fashioned in your notions; your letters read so much like Parson Moore’s Sermons, all about duty, and conscience, and peace, of all of which I am free to confess that I know nothing, and, of course, can write nothing. I once came to the conclusion, always to answer your letters on the sabbath, immediately after divine service, (I attend only the morning service.) I thought that, by so doing, I could introduce portions of the sermon, and make a decently religious letter; but my first and only trial was a failure—every word spoken by the minister was forgotten; all that I could remember of the service was this, “Dearly beloved brethren, the Scripture moveth us in sundry places”—but to what

it moveth us, I knew not: so, my dear Martha, you must allow me to rattle off in my own style. This letter must answer for you and Matilda too; for I am now fairly in the whirlpool—it is nothing but balls, cotillion parties, levees, from week to week, and, as Webster says in his Spelling-book, “Time flies, O how swiftly!”—I beg that you will not take this for a text now, and remind me what is said in the John Rogers’ Primer; namely, “Time cuts down all, both great and small;” my nerves are too weak to think of such things. Eloisa has been several weeks absent.

For some time before she left home, aunt was very pleasant, and particular in her attentions toward Eloisa, and, by sundry hints, seemed desirous that I should be so too. This was not difficult, especially as the kind-hearted girl met me more than half way in my friendly advances; and having discovered my foibles, she took especial pains to show off my knowledge (superficial as it is) to the best advantage. There are but few who do not feel flattered by Eloisa’s friendship; and I will be frank

enough to say, that it has contributed not a little to my importance. I really began to love her: this was not exactly what aunt desired, and, to my utter vexation, she has made me know her wishes. "You must know," said she, "my dear Emily, that Eloisa is deeply interested in 'A.' He is warmly devoted to her; her brother and uncle are determined upon the match. I, for reasons of my own, am resolved that it shall never take place; you are to aid me in thwarting their expectations." "And how?" I inquired. "Why, in the first place," she replied, "you must leave no means untried, that cunning can devise, to estrange A. from Eloisa. She has now your confidence; you have wit enough to know how to employ this advantage."

You may be sure, Martha, that I was not much pleased with all this. It seemed to me like parting with what little integrity I have for nothing. Aunt, no doubt, discovered this, and thought it best to reveal her plan more fully. "It would be no small triumph for me, and you must see an incalculable advantage to you if you could

secure for yourself such a person as A.” “That can never be,” I quickly replied. “We are entirely unsuited to each other; I should fear him all my lifetime, and he would despise me.” I then more than hinted that my affections were placed elsewhere. “Affection!” replied my aunt, contemptuously; “don’t talk of affection. A fig for all the love in this world; if you would be a fool, chase a shadow. Merton is a finished dandy; you have danced, and talked small talk with him—exchanged rhapsodies of perfumed paper—that is enough: such things in fashionable life usually end there. Merton is poor, and a fortune-hunter. He knows by this time that you have no fortune to give; but follow my advice, and you will secure one, and with it a person who would confer an honor on any lady to whom he offered his hand.” “But Eloisa,” said I, “I don’t like”—

My aunt interrupted me. Drawing herself up, and fixing her eyes sternly on me, “Emily,” said she, “it is best for you to know by what tenure you hold my favor.

My family were poor and unknown, that of my husband rich and aristocratic. I deceived them all—*how* I shall not now tell you; suffice it to say that, before the deceit was detected, I, the daughter of a poor cooper, became the wife of the eldest son and heir of one of the proudest and wealthiest families in the state. Could I have possibly worn the same mask, appearing the same gentle, artless, amiable creature—after, as before marriage—my husband would have ascribed the petty deceit to love, would have been flattered thereby, and all would have been well: but this I could not do. I married for money. I had always been ambitious, always felt the curse of poverty. I saw your uncle; enlisted his favor; won his affections; passed myself off as a relative, in the house where I was only an humble company keeper; played my cards well, and won the game. For a time I succeeded in retaining the heart thus caught in my snare. But his family despised me, while I hated them. Toward his queen-like old mother, whom he almost worship-

ed, I demeaned myself with the utmost scorn. My husband grew cold, and demanded of me that I should give up all connection with my own family, and I considered it as my safest way so to do. Your father, who is my eldest brother, was then rapidly rising in wealth as a merchant, and with him I ventured to keep up some connection, which, on his failure and removal to the country, was broken off.

“Thus I have lived for years, with but the hope and single aim of revenging myself in some way for the misery that I have endured. To aid me in carrying out this purpose, I have sent for you. If you prefer poverty and obscurity to wealth and honor, your path is open : the way to the latter lies through my patronage and favor, which can only be secured by compliance with my wishes.” “I will promise you anything,” said I; “only tell me why you have chosen the gentle Eloisa for your victim.” “Simply,” replied my aunt, “because I have not succeeded in finding another. She, too, is the namesake and counterpart of one who, of all others in

the family, was the object of my most bitter hatred : it was your uncle's only sister—his idol—whom he was doomed, in her youth and beauty, to lay in the grave ; whom he mourned for years, till he became hardly a shadow of his former self. But his brother died, leaving to his guardianship his two only children. Back came Eloisa ; for so entirely does she resemble her aunt, in form, in feature, and in manner, that I sometimes almost believe that the grave has given up its dead : but it is a most happy resurrection to your uncle. He is living his life over again in the society of his niece. The boy so much resembled his father, (who ever treated me with the most cool contempt,) that I determined on driving him from the house. In this I succeeded. His fiery temper could not long brook the insults purposely offered him ; but Eloisa will bear anything for her uncle's sake. Now, Emily," concluded my aunt, " you have only to co-operate with me, and your fortune is made. Eloisa has rather a premature knowledge of the world's deceitfulness ; it will not be a dif-

ficult thing to make her believe A. as deceitful as all her former dreams—her early sorrows, you know, have made her superstitious. A. is a misanthrope. He now looks upon Eloisa as an importation from the celestial regions: once cast the shadow of suspicion over this beautiful vision, and in the reaction of his feelings he will fix upon one who wears not the semblance of perfection.”

So, Martha, I have told you all; more, perhaps, than in honor I should have done: but there is a weight upon my spirit, and you know that, from childhood, I have cast all my burdens upon you. If I could resolve to follow your advice, whatever it might be, I would ask it; but I will not trifle with you. I now see a way in which the splendid dreams of years may be fulfilled—the airy castles of childhood may receive a “local habitation and a name”—why should such a temptation be presented, if to yield were fatal? Is father growing worse? Write soon.

Yours, affectionately,

EMILY.

"The answer to this letter," said Mrs. Austin, turning uneasily upon the bed, and fixing her glassy eyes upon her friend, was the last ever received from you.

"You never replied to that answer," said Mrs. Watson. "I supposed you were offended at its plainness, and did not venture to write again. You will recollect, too, during your short stay at home, after your father's funeral, how studiously you avoided me."

"I remember all—all," replied the sick woman. "Would to God that I could forget; but, no, memory never will slumber again—this will be the undying worm and the quenchless fire. But, Martha, it was not pride nor anger that made me stand aloof from my once cherished friends; it was *guilt*—the awful consciousness of inward pollution—the same 'great gulf' that lies wider and deeper between the 'sea of glass' and 'the lake of fire.'"

"O," said Mrs. Watson, with streaming eyes, "there was pride with me, or I should have rushed through every barrier to your rescue."

“Read your last faithful letter,” whispered the sick woman ; “and assure yourself that you did what you could.”

MARTHA TO EMILY.

MY DEAR EMILY,—You have not asked my advice ; you have even given me to understand that it would be disregarded. I will not tell you what principle urges me onward in the path whose name you so much dislike ; suffice it to say, that the principle is more mighty than the obstacles, and the path is one which I love to tread. Were it not so, I should see Emily plunge into the vortex of ruin without another effort to save her ; but, my friend—my childhood’s friend—how can I give thee up ? What if your splendid visions should be realized, how would the reality differ from the dream ? In no way, be assured, but in its guilt and misery. Your airy castles may receive a local habitation and a name, but it will be a name for which the darkest fiend would not barter his own.

One remark made by your aunt, and

quoted in your letter, gave me a thrill of joy; it was this:—"Your path is open." How I thanked God that it was so,—that the way to happiness and heaven is not yet hedged up to you for ever—that your retreat from the enchanted ground where you now stand is not utterly cut off; but, Emily, it will be. Allow me to use the language of Scripture, and say, "Escape for your life!" A more dreadful whirlpool than that of fashion is drawing you with its deceitful eddy. Let the spirit plunge into that abyss, and where is its ransom?—

"Nowhere! nowhere!" shrieked the sick woman, in wild delirium. "I know it all. I have gone down—down—but have found no platform yet; and it will for ever be thus—downward rolling—downward rolling—dismal gulf, to thee I'm bound."

Mrs. Watson immediately laid aside the letters, and sought by the most judicious means to soothe and quiet her. She laid Mrs. A.'s poor fevered head upon the pillow, smoothed back the hair from her

burning brow, and talked, in a soft, dream-like voice, of the quiet scenes familiar to their early youth. This had the desired effect; she sighed deeply, while a soft penitent expression, for the first time during that night, stole over her face. Her eyes closed slowly, and she sunk into an uneasy slumber.

“Let me watch beside her,” whispered Frank, who had all this time retained his seat on a low stool at the foot of the bed. “Let me watch, while you lie down and take a little rest.”

“My dear boy,” said Mrs. Watson, “are *you* not tired and sleepy?” “No, no,” replied Frank; “it seems to me that I never shall be sleepy again.”

The first gray light of morning straggled through the broken and solitary window of the sick room. Mrs. Watson, overcome with weariness and watching, had fallen asleep upon the same couch with her sick friend, who still lay starting and chattering in fitful slumber. The two boys showed no signs of waking. No place could exhibit more of dreariness than that broad,

dark chamber. But Frank thought not of this—new and strange ideas were crowding thickly upon his brain: he sat perfectly still, gazing upon the ghastly face before him, as though it were the only interpreter of what appeared to him a mystic dream. Suddenly the sick woman awoke, and fixed her large earnest eyes upon him. More and more did those glassy orbs dilate, till it seemed to Frank that they were starting from their sockets: at last she made an effort to rise from her pillow, and the little boy, trembling from head to foot, rose to assist her. She motioned him away; and then, with a ghastly smile, she whispered, “So I have crossed the dark river: but I can find my place without you—Eloisa Melville.”

“I am not Eloisa Melville,” replied Frank, firmly; “but I am her son, and am only here to do you good.”

“Listen, boy,” said the poor creature, in the same hoarse whisper, “you can do the lost no good—*she* tried, but it was no use. Well, she gave me up to perdition at last, and *him* too.” Here she burst into a wild

laugh, exclaiming, "I am glad that she let him go too—I shall see him."

The shrill laugh awoke Mrs. Watson, who hastened to administer an opiate, while little Frank, having obtained leave to call the next evening, took his hat, and groping through the dark entry, and down the creaking stairs, left the house.

CHAPTER VI.

THE HONEST HOUR—THE DYING CHAMBER—
STAR OF BETHLEHEM—HOPE AND DESPAIR
—THE CONFESSION—THE VICTIM—THE HY-
POCRITE—THE CONSUMMATION.

"Truth is deposited with man's last hour;
An honest hour, and faithful to her trust."

THE day which had now dawned shed but little of light and gladness upon that dying scene. The sun was curtained with dense clouds, and a thick drizzly rain, more cheerless in winter than at other seasons, fell with a ceaseless and mournful patter upon the shattered roof. But the darkest scenes of the present life may be lighted up by the Spirit's peace—the calm,

loving voice ; the sweet, tranquil face ; the firm, but gentle movement ; so marked in the true Christian ; all spring from the deep abiding peace within. What better gift could the Saviour have left with his disciples ?

It was the angel of peace that moved around in the dim twilight of that dark old room. The sick bed was adjusted ; the sufferer's head was bathed, and laid gently upon its pillow ; a bright fire was kindled ; a clean cloth spread upon the old table, which was supplied with food from the widow's basket. Charley and Abel moved softly about : the former understanding by a look all that his mother wanted ; the latter looking as though he could never do enough. The breakfast was now ready.

"Come, my children," said Mrs. Watson, drawing a small Bible from her pocket, and seating herself near the bed. "Emily," she continued, addressing the sick woman, "join with us in our morning devotions. Listen to me while I read the precious promises given to you—to all. Pray with us, too ; you need not fear : the

mercy-seat is still open to you—you have still an Intercessor there.”

“No, no!” exclaimed the poor creature; “you don’t know all—all! you know not half of my guilt and wretchedness.”

“No,” replied her friend, “perhaps not; but I know that they do not exceed in magnitude the great, the infinite atonement. I know that their height and depth, their length and breadth, can be compassed by infinite mercy. Your sins are great, they are many; but do not add to this dark list the greatest of all, which is unbelief.”

Sweet as the balm of Gilead were the passages selected and read by Mrs. Watson. Upon her own spirit they fell like dew upon the mountains of Zion. Charley’s voice blended harmoniously with his mother’s, as, to the sweet air of Bonnie Doon, they sung the hymn containing the following verse:—

“Once on the raging sea I rode—

The storm was loud, the night was dark,

The ocean yawn’d, and rudely blow’d

The wind, that toss’d my found’ring bark.

Deep horror then my vitals froze,
Death-struck, I ceased the tide to stem,
When suddenly a star arose,
It was the star of Bethlehem."

Sigh after sigh escaped the sick woman, as her friend, in the simple but earnest language of faith, commended her to God; and long after they had risen from prayer, she lay with clasped hands and closed eyes—the poor fainting spirit evidently struggling in silent supplication. During that whole day did Mrs. Watson labor hard to fix her attention on the one great object of pardon and peace with God. But the past hung like the pall of death over the brow of hope. "I must tell you all," said she, grasping the hand of her friend. "Don't tell me it is unnecessary. You must know my guilt; and then if you can believe that there is mercy in heaven for me, I will try and believe too.

"My time is too short even to touch upon the countless stratagems, the deep deceit, the ceaseless toil, which at last effected a wide estrangement between A. and Eloisa. Merton, whose services were

enlisted, entered heartily into the plot; his deep and well-trying cunning was of infinite service to us, while my aunt's ingenuity in devising schemes was invaluable to him. Poor Eloisa! in the dark hour of her disappointment and sorrow, fancying that she had sinned in yielding her heart to earthly love, at once broke off all connection with the world around her; turned her thoughts and affections to heaven; and was happy. But it was not thus with A. He more than ever believed in the falsity of the whole human race; was more bitter than ever in his denunciations of all things seemingly fair: but still he followed the phantom, though cursing its light, and seemed at last to take a savage delight in tracing out the end of all human perfection.

“It was a striking comment on my aunt's knowledge of the worst part of human nature, that A., from his first suspicion of Eloisa, attached himself to me. The keen satire with which I had learned to attack everything lovely and of good report, seemed to afford him the greatest

pleasure; and, though I loved him not, my ambition spurred me on to what all would consider a splendid conquest. 'You cannot suppose,' said Merton, in a *tete a tete* with myself and aunt, 'that I have been totally disinterested in seeking to break up this match between A. and Miss Melville. I expect in return for my faithful services that you will tell me how to win the heart which I have helped to rob of its idol.' 'Good!' exclaimed my aunt; 'the plot thickens! Become a saint, Merton, and the fair Eloisa, with her still fairer fortune, is yours: that is your surest way. We have succeeded in making her believe that A. is an infidel; it will not be so difficult to make her believe you a saint.' Merton thanked my aunt for the hint; we promised our aid, talked over the way in which it could be done, laughed at the capital joke, and separated.

"It was now the business of aunt and myself, whenever Eloisa was present, to talk and laugh about the wonderful change in Merton. At first she appeared hardly

to notice the subject of our conversation, but we persevered. Aunt would quote remarks as made by him, which we knew exactly corresponded with Eloisa's sentiments and feelings, and then ridicule them as absurd and fanatical. From the frequency of these conversations, Eloisa at last became interested, and took part in them. She warmly vindicated the sentiments which were advanced as Merton's, and expressed herself happy that one more immortal spirit had opened its eyes to the true meaning of time, and its union with eternity: and it was not unfrequent that her remarks, so perfectly in keeping with the teachings of conscience; her appeals, so earnest and solemn, would impel us to change the conversation to some other.

“‘ You must not suppose, my dear Eloisa,’ said aunt, on one occasion, ‘ that I intend wholly to condemn sentiments and opinions like these, but, in order to do us all justice, you should hear Merton talk; he has given up balls, assemblies, and everything of the kind, only occasionally

coming in to our select evening parties. Be present this evening, my dear, and judge for yourself.'

"I well remember that evening," continued Mrs. Austin, after an interval of rest. "Uncle Melville, though a man of few words, had for some reasons evidently imbibed a strong prejudice against religion and its professors. He had become deeply concerned for Eloisa. Her utterly refusing to participate in the amusements which he considered almost indispensable to life, had stamped with truth an assertion frequently made by aunt, that the poor girl was running mad on the subject. None but those who know to what a perfection of deceit the human heart can arrive, can imagine the ease with which Merton played his part. I cannot believe that this was the first time this character had been assumed by him; words of piety seemed to flow as naturally from his lips as from those of the simple-hearted Eloisa.

"Uncle, who took it for granted that every religious man must be a hypocrite, responded to some of his sentiments with

most ungracious contempt. A., who from the first suspected his motives, opened upon him a whole battery of the most biting sarcasm: all this was borne by Merton with the most exemplary patience. He ‘feigned a firmness Christians need not feign.’ Nor was it feigned in the calm, self-possessed Eloisa, whose zeal kindled for the cause of truth, and who replied to A. in a manner that showed but too plainly that she considered him as one who would hide eternity with time—assuring him that he might as well attempt to cover the ocean with the atoms upon its shore. I remember but little else of the evening, excepting that A. scarcely spoke again, and retired early; and that Merton, on going away, said to Eloisa, ‘We see, we hear, with peril; safety dwells remote from the multitude.’ ”

Here Mrs. Austin, greatly exhausted, sunk into a lethargy, from which her friend feared she would never awake; but toward evening she revived again. Mrs. Watson begged her to say and think no more of the past, but to employ her few

remaining hours in a preparation for eternity. The sick woman shook her head. "I know," said she, "that life is waning, and I must be brief; but where is that boy? did I dream it? or did he tell me that he was Eloisa's son? It must be so; her soul looks from his eyes."

"He will come again in the evening," said Mrs. Watson.

"That is right," replied the sufferer, passing her hand over her damp brow; "it is but just that he should see how his mother's murderer must die. Yes, yes, Martha," she continued, "I killed that poor creature; though I did not make her wretched. No power on earth could do that; for the peace that passeth all understanding was hers: but we succeeded in our fiendish plot. She knew that her uncle and brother hated Merton. Aunt and I pretended to do the same, and all because he was a Christian. She sympathized with him. She loved the cause for which he suffered, and through it she imbibed a friendship for him. Uncle knew it, and treated her coolly; her brother, contemptu-

ously; aunt and I, any way that would serve to hasten the longed-for decision. Suffice it to say that Eloisa was married—the gentle, pious, high-souled Eloisa, to as black a villain as ever lived.

“The rage of her uncle, the scorn of her brother, the insulting pity of aunt and myself, all hastened her departure to India, where her husband pretended to have property in large investments. My own marriage with Austin soon followed that of Eloisa’s. Thus was my triumph complete. But, ah! how little worth! I found myself mistress of a splendid establishment—the courted, the envied wife of the proud, wealthy Austin—but was I happy? God knoweth—He that searcheth the heart knoweth—that I dared not meet that heart alone. I shut my eyes and closed my ears to everything but pleasure—seeking to drown my soul in its intoxicating cup. I circled round and round in the deceitful eddy—every circle drawing me nearer and nearer to the awful vortex into which I knew I must be plunged at last.

“My husband was not less reckless.

Night after night our doors were thrown open, and our apartments thronged with the pleasure-seeking world; while the lavish expenditure of his wealth seemed to show but one intent, and that to bring the splendid farce to a speedy close. It was during this time that my sister Matilda visited us; but shocked with our wild, irresponsible manner of life, after an earnest appeal to us as rational and immortal beings, she returned to her quiet home and widowed mother. I remember a remark made by Austin on the day she left us, when, overcome with emotion, the poor girl bade us farewell, and then returned once more, entreating us to 'stop and think.' 'Why, in Heaven's name,' said A., 'are you not like your sister?'

"But our gorgeous dream passed away, and fearful was the hour of waking. Our wealth had taken wings—an humble home in a country village was all that remained of our princely fortune. What a thought for me, who had sacrificed the immortal soul to the god of gold! Austin seemed to care but little; there had long been a

fever upon his brain, and a wasting of life, that told him plainly enough that earth's treasure would soon be no treasure to him. He even seemed to rejoice in the change, so awful to me : quietly settled down in our new home ; formed an ardent friendship for the young pastor of the village, with whom he walked, rode, talked, and at last—prayed ; thus becoming—what with Eloisa he had long before been—a penitent, trusting Christian.

“ Not thus with me. How dreadful to a spirit, guilty and tossed like mine, were the peaceful shades of our country home ! The calm evening breath, that whispered pardon and peace to the weary and penitent, was to me the voice of an accusing angel, awful as the thunders of Sinai. I well remember how my husband and his pious friend sought to win my heart to the Christian's rest ; but it was not for me : and at last, unable to endure the society of the rational and happy, I drew from Austin an unwilling consent that I should return for a few months to the gay scenes of my former life. I left my child (then

scarcely two years old) with his invalid father, and gladly returned to my aunt's. I remember the reception given from my uncle, which was of the most ungracious character. Nor was that of my aunt so cordial as I had a right to expect. Her health was becoming very poor; she was nervous and irritable, almost beyond endurance: but choosing anything rather than the quiet of my own home, I exerted every power to amuse her; and so far succeeded as to secure an invitation to remain during the winter. I knew enough of the world to understand that many, even of those by whom, in the days of my prosperity, I had been copied, envied, and courted, would now hardly recognize 'poor Mrs. Austin.' I was not, therefore, greatly disappointed that but few, among the throng for whose amusement I had lavished thousands, could even remember having ever seen me before. But it was a great relief to my chagrin and mortification that *Merton*, gay and attentive as ever, was spending the winter in the city. His religious garb, now unnecessary, was thrown

off. Eloisa's fortune had procured him one more to his liking.

"I will not pretend that there was no occasion given by Merton and myself, in our close intimacy, for rumor, which assailed us with her thousand tongues, and which at last reached Eloisa, who had left home before her husband, and was now visiting some friends near the city. She immediately sought us out, and entreated Merton to return with her to India. Letters from thence had long before demanded his immediate presence. How lost to virtue was that heart which, week after week, could witness her deep anxiety; the writhing of her woman's heart; and seek to prolong its agony! Ah, my God! this fiendish task was mine. Merton did not hate his angel wife. He ever spoke of her as something holy beyond his power of conception. He did not love her—he could not, no more than the foul, darkling worm, can love the beautiful stars of night. But he might have heeded her entreaties; no doubt he would, had it not been for me. She waited long; endured the pity,

which, to her sensitive spirit, was worse than scorn : but there was a limit even to patience like hers.

“ Never shall I forget the moment when virtue, roused to holy indignation, resolved to bear no more. That last interview with Eloisa ! Ah, Martha ! my doom has been fixed from that hour. How Merton and I, guilty wretches that we were, quailed before the light of her calm, searching eye ! how the words from her pure lips fell upon our polluted spirits, like fire upon the seared and shrinking flax ! I have seen her, Martha, many and many a night since, as she stood before me then ; her little boy by her side—her cheek pale as the driven snow. I will not tell you what she said to me that day : those words would kindle the flames of perdition before their time. She left us, returned to India with her child, and I saw her no more—no more—save as she comes to me at night—comes when the wind howls and shrieks, and the raging sea tosses up its waves. I often see her then—she glares upon me with those eyes, that to all others are sealed in death ; she

points with her taper finger to the midnight sky, and tells me that the dead live again—that ‘the streams here divided by the desert and the rock,’ meet in the solemn hades, and mingle into one.”

CHAPTER VII.

HOPE FOR THE GUILTY—PRAYER FOR THE PERISHING—THE DEATH STRUGGLE—THE WINDING SHEET—REMINISCENCES.

“How the poor soul raves round the walls of her clay tenement;

Runs to each avenue and shrieks for help,
But shrieks in vain.”

Who does not remember the house of death? Who, even among the gay dreamers of this mortal life, that dance away its brief moments upon a fickle stage, does not remember the hasty summons, the palpitating heart, the soft and trembling step, around the bed of death? What human heart does not faint to see even the Christian die? But when death puts on no robe of light; when the shivering spirit

starts with fear at his approach ; who can behold a scene like this, and not exclaim,—

“ Rock of ages—cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee ?”

Such was the prayer of some hearts that throbbed with anguish as they gathered around the dying bed. “ And why should *you* come ?” exclaimed the poor raving sufferer ; “ ah ! why at this dreadful hour should all who once sought to redeem me from destruction, come to see the despiser perish ?”

“ To do you good ; to tell you that there is still hope,” said Mr. Boyden, who had just entered with little Frank.

“ No, no !” replied Mrs. Austin ; “ you do not believe it ; you who know that I forsook him, returning only in time to hear his dying prayer for his worse than orphan child, for his wretched, guilty wife.”

“ And that prayer was heard,” said Mr. Boyden.

“ For the child !” gasped the sufferer ; “ yes, I see it now—you have come to save his boy,” and then with a wild laugh of

maniac joy she exclaimed, "God will not suffer Abel to perish because he is his child."

With the calm assurance of one who knew the plenitude of mercy in Jesus Christ, did Mr. Boyden whisper hope and peace to that agonized spirit; and for a moment that spirit would seem to rouse its energies, and in its very desperation to seize the hope of the guilty. But despair would not easily relinquish an empire so long its own; and the dark, wild struggles, which followed this momentary lighting up of hope, were fearful to behold.

"Our only trust," whispered Mr. Boyden to Mrs. Watson, "must be in Him who is able to pluck even this brand from the burning:" and long did that dark, gloomy chamber, resound with the voice of prayer.

All was silent. The stillness of death was gathering there; and as they once more bent over the dying bed, they saw his seal upon that pale brow. "Emily, Emily," said Mrs. Watson, "do you believe in Christ, do you trust in the Saviour of sinners?" "I wish—I wish"—

gasped the poor woman. But *what* she wished was sealed to the judgment of the great day. The spirit was gone—the aching head was at rest.

Stretched coldly upon the bed, and wrapped in its winding sheet, lay the lifeless form of Mrs. Austin: around the dull fire sat Mr. Boyden, Mrs. Watson, Frank, and Abel. The latter had sobbed himself asleep upon Mr. Boyden's knee. "Poor boy!" said the kind man, "how I loved his father!"

"Had you known him long?" inquired Mrs. Watson.

"No," was the reply; "the first time that I saw him was on a sabbath morning, as he entered the house of worship where I preached. In a small country village like ours, every member of the church and congregation is, or should be, known by his minister. This was the case in my parish, and when Austin came to church for the first time, I knew him to be a stranger; yet my heart yearned toward him. The subject of my discourse that morning was the Christian's rest; the text, 'Great

peace have they that love thy law.' His manner during the sermon convinced me that he would gladly learn the way of peace: his sunken cheek and flashing eye told but too plainly that he was approaching a point where nothing else would be of any avail to him. I was happy to learn that he had come to take up his abode with us, and made him an early call. He received me more than politely—kindly, almost *tenderly*—and in the course of conversation reverted to the subject of the sabbath morning's discourse; frankly acknowledged that he had wasted life in seeking rest where it could not be found; and expressed a desire to profit by my acquaintance and religious instruction. With these desires and feelings," continued Mr. Boyden, "you will not be surprised that he was soon led to that cross where the weary and heavy-laden find rest. My heart greatly exulted in this marked and happy change, and as a matter of course I became deeply solicitous that his wife might be a partaker of the same blessed hope. But one thing ever was a matter

of surprise with me, that, though Austin seemed deeply penetrated with a sense of the infinitude of that mercy that stooped to him, and often expressed himself, if not in the language, at least in the sentiment, of the poet who says,

The arms of love that compass me
Would all mankind embrace;

yet whenever I spoke of his wife as a subject for prayer and Christian effort, a look of sadness, almost of despair, would steal over his countenance, and though he was earnest and fervent in prayer for his child, I do not remember that he ever in my presence offered a petition for her.

“During her absence I became aware that his life was rapidly hastening to a close, and more than once offered to write for him, and request her to return : but he seemed quite indifferent to this, said that she was enjoying herself in the society of her choice, that his wants were all supplied, and that she could be of no use to him in a preparation for the world to which he was hastening.

“I did not at that time believe him

aware of his situation ; and once during the winter, while on a visit to the city, and hearing unfavorable reports respecting Mrs. Austin, I took the liberty of a friend and minister of the gospel to call on her—to urge her return home ; and, at last, as a strong inducement, assured her that her reputation was at stake. She laughed at this ; told me that scandal in fashionable life was nothing ; that no more could be said about her than was said of Becky Burns, in my parish, when she went down cellar backward with a looking-glass, repeating these lines,—

‘ Whoe’er’s my true love to be,
Let him look o’er my shoulder,
In this looking-glass to me.’

“ An account of her husband’s health seemed more successful, and she promised a speedy return. This was mid-winter, toward spring. I wrote informing her that if she would see her husband alive, no time was to be lost. Austin died suddenly. A few hours only before his departure she returned home. I was not with him at the last, having been called to a distant

part of the town. He died in peace, and in his last moments, as though faith had received new power by the opening light of eternity, he prayed for his wife.

“After the death of her husband, Mrs. Austin seemed to sink into a state of listless despair. She had never been a favorite in the village; and the course pursued by her during her husband’s sickness, as well as the stories which had reached our village, were in no way calculated to remove the unfavorable impression which her restless, haughty manner, had long before made. My own health failed about this time, and I was obliged to relinquish my pastoral labors and spend a year abroad. On my return to the village, I was grieved to learn that Mrs. Austin had gone no one knew whither. The cottage and most of the furniture had been sold to satisfy the demands of creditors; and it gave me no little pain to know that my people, notwithstanding my teaching, had so imperfectly learned Christ as to allow this poor woman (guilty though she might be) to pine in solitude for nearly a year,

and then to go out, none knowing or caring whither she went. My health was somewhat recovered, but not sufficiently to undertake again the duties of a pastor. I removed to this place and opened a high-school for boys. But though I've often thought anxiously of the wife and child of my friend, no clew to them could be obtained. My little Frank here, who I am happy to say makes a friend and confident of his teacher, told me where he spent the last night—of the sufferings of the poor woman, whom he described, and whom I at once suspected and feared was Mrs. Austin.

“I thank God,” continued Mr. Boyden, raising his eyes devoutly to heaven; “I thank God that I am here, that I have found this child: his father's prayers will be heard. I will teach him the way of peace which his father found at last—and his mother, poor woman, I would hope that she obtained mercy; but ah! what a path she has trod! Surely the way of transgressors is hard: ‘There is no peace to the wicked.’”

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CHRISTIAN'S WATCH.

“O, be Thine arm as it hath been
In every test of heart and faith—
The tempter's doubt—the wiles of men—
The heathen's scoff—the bosom sin;
A helper and a stay beneath;
A strength in weakness, 'mid the strife
And anguish of my wasting life;
My solace and my hope in death!”

ONE more sad day and dreary night passed away, while the faithful Mrs. Watson watched beside the lifeless form of her friend. Here was death in its awful reality: no trappings of wealth with which to veil its cold, stern visage; no sweet, homelike voices, assuring the heart that it was not all alone—alone with the disrobed spirit and the spiritless clay. But shrink not, Christian, from companionship with the dead. Stand on the threshold while the gate of eternity is opened to the parting spirit. Linger awhile. The soul will feel the spray of those dark waters, and wake from her earthly dreams.

The pious Mrs. Watson had often proved the truth of this. She welcomed an opportunity to converse with death alone; and therefore requested Mr. Boyden to take little Abel, along with Frank and Charles, to school. This was a great relief to the poor child. His constitution had become weakened from want and constant confinement; while fear and anxiety on account of his mother had induced a weakness of the nerves, painful, and much to be deplored.

Through the day, Mrs. Watson employed herself in gathering together the little left by her friend; manifesting in all she did the same fidelity which had ever characterized her life. As she pursued her task, it became more and more evident to her mind that the malady so painful in Mrs. Austin's last hours was one of long standing. Things of little or no value, but no doubt of soothing association in the mind of the poor woman, had been treasured with the greatest care; while others of costly worth had been thrown in places less likely to meet the eye. Among these,

Mrs. Watson found several rings of considerable value; and in a still more remote corner, evidently consigned to oblivion, a massive gold chain, to which was attached a locket of the same precious metal. All these were carefully secured for little Abel, and something too more precious to his warm heart than silver and gold: this was his father's portrait, which was found in a remote closet carefully covered with black crape. Many tears fell from the kind-hearted Mrs. Watson, as new proofs of her friend's sufferings continually multiplied around her. She thought of other days, and with deep emotion inquired, Who made me to differ?

“Why was I made to hear His voice,
And enter while there's room,
While others make a wretched choice,
And rather starve than come?”

“It has been good for me to be here,” said Mrs. Watson, as she rose from prayers, and looked out upon the darkening street. She did not shudder at the thought of remaining alone with the dead through the silent watches of another night. But there

was still a natural feeling of relief, at seeing Mr. Boyden, with a gentleman and lady, and the little boys, coming toward the house. The widow hastened to rekindle the fire; to light the newly trimmed lamp; and to draw a curtain around the dead.

"We have come to spend the night with you," said Mr. Boyden, introducing his friends, who, with Christian affection, greeted the good woman, and sat down socially by the now cheerful fire.

Little Abel, whose wounded feelings had experienced a temporary relief from the new scenes and employments of the past day, now felt those wounds opened afresh. The nice warm supper, carefully provided by Mrs. Watson, was untouched; while he sat gloomily in the corner, the tears coursing one another down his pale cheeks. Charley and Frank pitied their little friend, but what could they do? Frank knew how useless words are to grief like this, and so he sat down and cried too. The very thought of losing his mother was enough to bring tears to Charley's eyes; and sympathy for his friend

was enough to bid them flow. So the little boys clustered together and wept. But Mr. Boyden placed a seat for Frank and Charley, close to his own, and, taking little Abel upon his knee, began to talk in a very pleasant, cheerful voice. The other gentleman, with the two ladies, joined in the conversation; and soon the poor orphan boy, soothed by gentle tones and sweet Christian words, fell asleep. The trundle-bed was wheeled close to the fire, and little Abel was tenderly laid therein; Frank and Charley ate their suppers, and laid down beside him; the remainder sat around the fire during the long winter night, talking of life with its various paths—of the evil and good that are offered to the spirit's choice; of the eternity unseen and unexplored by man, yet present and glorious to the eye of faith; and when the morning broke, each felt that a new light had beamed upon the spirit's path, and new strength was received for the Christian's race.

The close of that day saw the old house by the seaside deserted and alone. The green sea waves still came booming up to

its dark old walls, and the spray leaped to its mossy roof. But the heart that had throbbed in mournful cadence,

“Like the low and heavy beating
Of the pulses of the sea”—

that heart of wild unrest—was hushed for ever. Prayer had been offered; the lifeless form laid decently upon its cold earth-bed—the warm, gushing tears of childhood; the pitying tears of true and faithful friendship, hallowed by Christian submission and hope, had watered the wintry sod; and the dead was alone:

“No longer seek her merits to disclose,
Or draw her frailties from this dread abode;
Where they alike in trembling hope repose,
The bosom of her Father and her God.”

We shall now see little Abel sharing with Charley the earnest care and maternal affection of the kind Mrs. Watson. Her house was now his home; she was his dear mother; Charley was his kind, affectionate brother; and Mr. Boyden, his father's friend, was his faithful teacher and guide. Would heaven that every little shorn lamb could find such a fold!

CHAPTER IX.

THE NARROW WAY—THE WAY OF PEACE.

“ Though dropping as the manna fell,
Unseen, yet from above—
Holy and gentle—heed it well !
The call to truth and love.”

It will be remembered that in the fourth chapter of our narrative we gave some account of a discovery made by Frank ; a discovery no less than that of a noble moral power as yet unheeded, and almost unknown. We have heard the little boy declare that he would be *true*, and have felt that a decision was made infinitely important to his character in future life. We remember the immediate effect of this decision, even before time and circumstances had tested its strength and sincerity. No longer quailing before the human eye, or hiding himself from a human frown, by seeking “ a refuge of lies,” the little boy stood upright in his new moral strength. This is a glorious freedom even for the oppressed—the freedom of

right motive, right intention, and resolute right action.

Thus was Frank made free. No more a crouching slave, selling his soul for so mean a price as a guilty smile, our noble Frank looked up like a boy that knew he had a soul, and intended it no wrong. He now saw in his uncle's family eyes that quailed before the clear, steady light of his own.

"The boy is growing insufferable," said Mrs. Melville; and, as is generally the case with the *untrue*, she hated, as well as feared, the eye of virtue. Mr. Melville was not less disquieted, though he scarcely knew why. To James, Frank became a faithful and fearless monitor; one whom the boy, vicious as he was, really respected and loved.

But something more was requisite than merely strength and pride of moral character to sustain the spirit amid the trials that Frank was soon called to meet. *Truth* he had learned, but not *love*. Instead of pity, he found in his heart a deep-rooted *scorn* for moral weakness, growing with

his growth, and strengthening with his strength. This pride of character wrought impatience in his manner, which the eye of his faithful teacher was not long in discovering. It cannot be supposed that the pious Mr. Boyden was ignorant of the only antidote for a disease like this; but he was doomed to see, as many a faithful Christian does, the heart impervious to such a balm. Pride encases the heart with an armor of steel. The Spirit of God alone can pierce that armor, and open a pathway for heavenly light. Faith in that Spirit's power sustained and kept alive hope in the teacher's heart; while in behalf of his young friend he was instant at the throne of grace, and waited patiently for the Lord.

Time passed on, while James was becoming notorious for his vices. The wealth and character of his father had thus far interposed to save him from the degrading punishments which, to the portionless and unknown, are freely awarded. But the time had come when wealth, though it might shield him from punishment, could

not hide his disgrace. Enraged beyond measure, the father cursed his child, and drove him from his house. Frank, proud as he was, stooped to intercession for his cousin. But it was in vain—James was disowned, and became a wanderer upon the pathless seas. Mrs. Melville, driven to madness, became the unceasing torment of him who had sacrificed everything for *peace*. The sight of Frank, or even the knowledge of his being in the house, increased her maniac rage in a tenfold degree. And poor Mr. Melville, still seeking peace, though he found none, gave to Frank a liberal supply of means to furnish himself a more desirable home. Frank was not long in deciding where that home should be, and good Mrs. Watson received to her maternal care a third son, scarcely less dear to her affectionate heart than Abel and Charley. Mr. Boyden rejoiced exceedingly in this arrangement. He looked upon it as ominous of good to Frank; nor was he disappointed.

“I have not, after all, found the way of peace,” said Frank, as he sat one even-

ing with Mrs. Watson, and Charles, and Abel.

“And yet, my dear Frank,” replied the good widow, “you have not been at a loss in discovering other ways. You have learned how to secure your own and the world’s respect; you expect, too, to gain its honors—all this is nothing without peace. But, my son, why cannot you *find* the way of peace?”

Frank. I esteemed myself once as having found it; when discovering my own moral power, and finding in myself, too, a courage equal to carrying out these noble principles, I thought myself possessed of the treasure which gold cannot buy. But the very knowledge of my strength has produced weakness. I am now a prey to disappointment.

Mrs. Watson. How true, my dear Frank, are the words of Jesus, “Without *me* ye can do nothing!” Thank Heaven that you feel yourself without strength; you may thus be led to the *Strong*. It is no wonder, my son, that you, with eyes running to

and fro in the earth, have not discovered the "way of peace." It is a *narrow* way, "cast up in the wilderness for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in." "The *vulture's* eye has not seen it," Frank; no wonder, then, that keen-sighted worldly wisdom knows it not.

Frank. How is it, then, to be found?

Mrs. Watson. Jesus says, "I am the door; there is no other." Come to him, Frank, and he will show you the way of peace. Your weakness here, will be your strongest plea. Cast aside your moral strength; it will be in the way of coming to Christ. Be as weak as you can, my dear boy; make yourself so by loosing your grasp from every earthly thing.

"Will you not, Frank?" said Mr. Boyden, who had entered in time to hear the last sentence.

"I will," said Frank, with characteristic promptness; "I will try."

"And now are you *sure*," continued his teacher, while the tears gathered to his eyes; "are you sure that you will try in

the right way? Will you be willing to renounce yourself, becoming as nothing that you may win Christ?"

Frank hesitated. The Spirit of the Lord impelled him to count the cost of such a decision; but the same Spirit urged its claims with increasing power. "I know not, as yet," said Frank, speaking slowly, "what is required of me, but I will promise to do what I can; I would find the way of peace. *You* know the path that opens to that way; I will be guided by your direction."

"May God give us grace to guide you aright," said Mr. Boyden, lifting his eyes to heaven. Then taking Frank by the hand, he clearly pointed out the way of repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Frank heard the story of the cross that night as if it had been for the first time; his proud heart melted at the view of love so infinite.

Mrs. Watson, who from her son's earliest infancy had given him to the Lord, now indulged a strong hope that her offering had been accepted. Charley, in his deep

and fervent love for spiritual things, had given, even in the days of his boyhood, undoubted evidence of a renewed heart, and his mother rejoiced that the good seed did not seem destined to wither away under the rays of manhood's sun. Charles was evidently growing in grace, and in the knowledge of his Saviour. Abel, too, who in his excellent character and fine talents was amply rewarding the kindness and solicitude of his friends, was not indifferent to the claims of religion. He loved Frank with an almost superhuman love. He looked upon him as perfection absolute. It cannot be supposed, therefore, that Frank's decision was without weight to him. "If Frank needs this improvement to his moral character, I more." "Your father died a Christian, Abel," urged Mr. Boyden. "And I fear that mother did not," thought the poor young man, as the tears rose to his eyes. "Let *me* die the death of the righteous."

The evening was now far spent. "Those who desire the salvation of the gospel," said Mr. Boyden, "will not refuse to come

with us to the mercy-seat; and Frank and Abel bowed with their teacher, and Mrs. Watson and Charles, at the throne of grace. What suppliant comes there in vain? None who come in the name of Jesus. A short struggle with human pride and unbelief, and our young friends entered "the path of peace."

It was now becoming necessary that Charles and Abel should enter upon some means of permanent support. Mr. Boyden had bestowed on both all that he had to give, namely, a good education. But they were now approaching manhood, and something must be done. Both were inclined to trade, but some other employment must first furnish them with capital. Frank determined to make an effort for his young friends. He called on his uncle, told him the story of the house by the sea-side—of the awful death of one whom he had known. Before the story was half concluded, Mr. Melville impatiently inquired what had become of Austin's son. "They shall have what they need for this," was his reply, as Frank told him the pre-

sent situation and wishes of the young men. "Austin," said he, striking his hand on his forehead, and pacing the room, "Austin was my friend. Had he been my brother, I were a less guilty man." About two years from this time the conversation narrated in our next chapter took place.

CHAPTER X.

THE EARTHLY NAME—PEACE FOR THE PENITENT.

"Yet loved of the Father, thy Spirit is near,
To the meek, and the lowly, and penitent here ;
And the voice of thy love is the same even now
As at Bethany's tomb, or on Olivet's brow."

Frank Merton. And you will not forgive him ! and shall I bear that answer back to your poor suffering son, confined with mortal sickness in the stowed cabin of a filthy schooner ?

Edgar Melville. As you please ; James is no longer my son. He has disgraced me, and I cast him off for ever ; his mother's life has been the forfeit of her anxiety and affection for this worthless fellow ; her

forgiveness (were she living) might no doubt be obtained—mine he shall never have.

Frank. And will you allow me to ask, sir, if you expect forgiveness for yourself?

Melville. Of whom should I seek it? I have never tarnished a name which, for generations, has been considered a rich legacy in itself.

Frank. Perhaps not; but of what avail will this name be to you in that world to which all are hastening, when the hue of *deed* and *thought* will tell upon the destinies of eternity? What eye there will look upon the shriveled scroll that bears only an earthly name? Not His who searcheth the heart, and to whom the secrets of all hearts are known.

Melville. And who will be my accuser there? What evil have I done in the world? Whom have I injured?

Frank. Your own conscience, my dear sir, is your accuser here; think not that it will be silent there. A long, dark catalogue, of not only the evil we have done, but the good we have omitted to do, will

stand out in the light of the last day. Happy, thrice happy, those who find in the only Sacrifice for sin an Advocate more potent than their accuser.

Melville. Some concession is due you, Frank; to another I would yield nothing. You have redeemed your mother's name, and made even *Merton* one of which the world will be proud. I will excuse your plainness; I will forget that you are a young man, and my nephew, once dependent on my bounty. With this wretched son of mine do as you please, only keep him from my presence.

Different, far different, was the scene just witnessed to the one awaiting the noble and sympathizing Frank. The splendid mansion; the richly furnished apartment; the haughty, but troubled, bearing of the rich man—the father—how strong in outward contrast to the low, dark room; the narrow, comfortless bed, of the suffering son! Conceal the heart with all its deep, unutterable anguish, and who would not choose to be the former? Unveil the heart, lashed by conscience, stung by

memory, lacerated by earthly sorrow, yet fortified and frozen by human pride, and who would not choose the latter?

“I have come to remove you from this dreary place,” said Frank, as he bent affectionately over the sufferer, and laid his hand upon the fevered brow of James.

James Melville. No, no, my cousin, my dear, kind friend, there is not a place in the wide world so precious to me as this; let me die in this dark old cabin, only be near me at the last, and I ask no more. Life, my dear Frank, is glimmering like the wasted taper; were it otherwise, I might illustrate by a history of my own sinful life, that no way but that of wisdom is pleasant—no other path is a path of peace; but I am passing away, passing away in my youth—cast off by my kindred, proscribed by my country’s laws, and yet—

Frank. Having peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

James. And this is the most wonderful of all. It came to me here—here in this dark little cabin, where the waves rolled

over the creaking deck, and this poor aching head almost longed for its watery winding-sheet ; then came again to my mind the words of wisdom, from which, in other days, I had turned with scorn. Then they came back, and I wondered if the Man of Nazareth would listen to me. Ah, Frank, Frank, did he ever turn any away ? Surely not ; if so, there could have been no hope for me. But where is Mr. Boyden ?

Frank. The much-loved pastor of his former flock.

James. Tell him that his bread cast upon the waters was found after many days—that after years of sin and suffering, James Melville died in peace ; but tell me of my school-fellows. What of Abel Austin, Mr. Boyden's foster son, and the generous Charles Watson ?

Frank. Partners in trade, honorable and thriving merchants in this city. It is to Charles's house that I would have you removed ; where his kind mother, who has long been a mother to Abel and myself, will delight to tend you with maternal care.

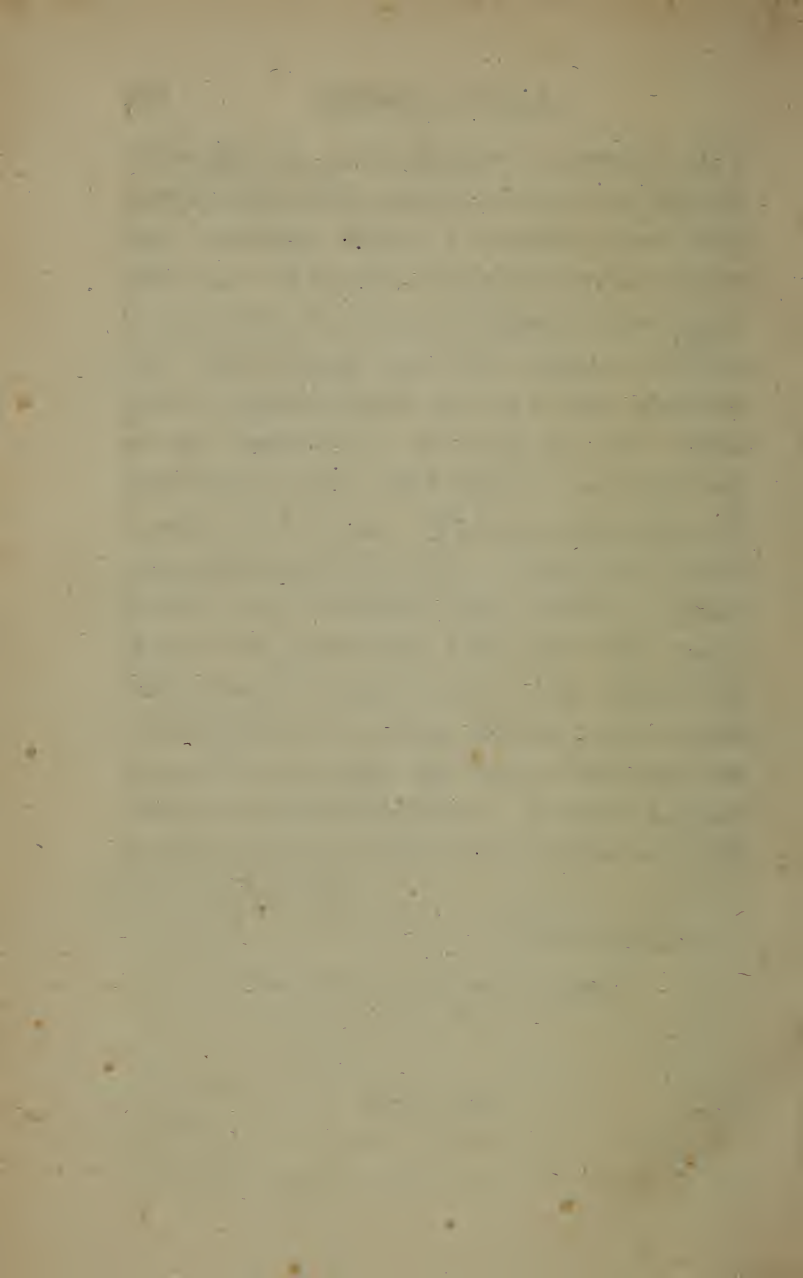
James. Do with me as you will; I deserve nothing either from heaven or earth—all is of grace.

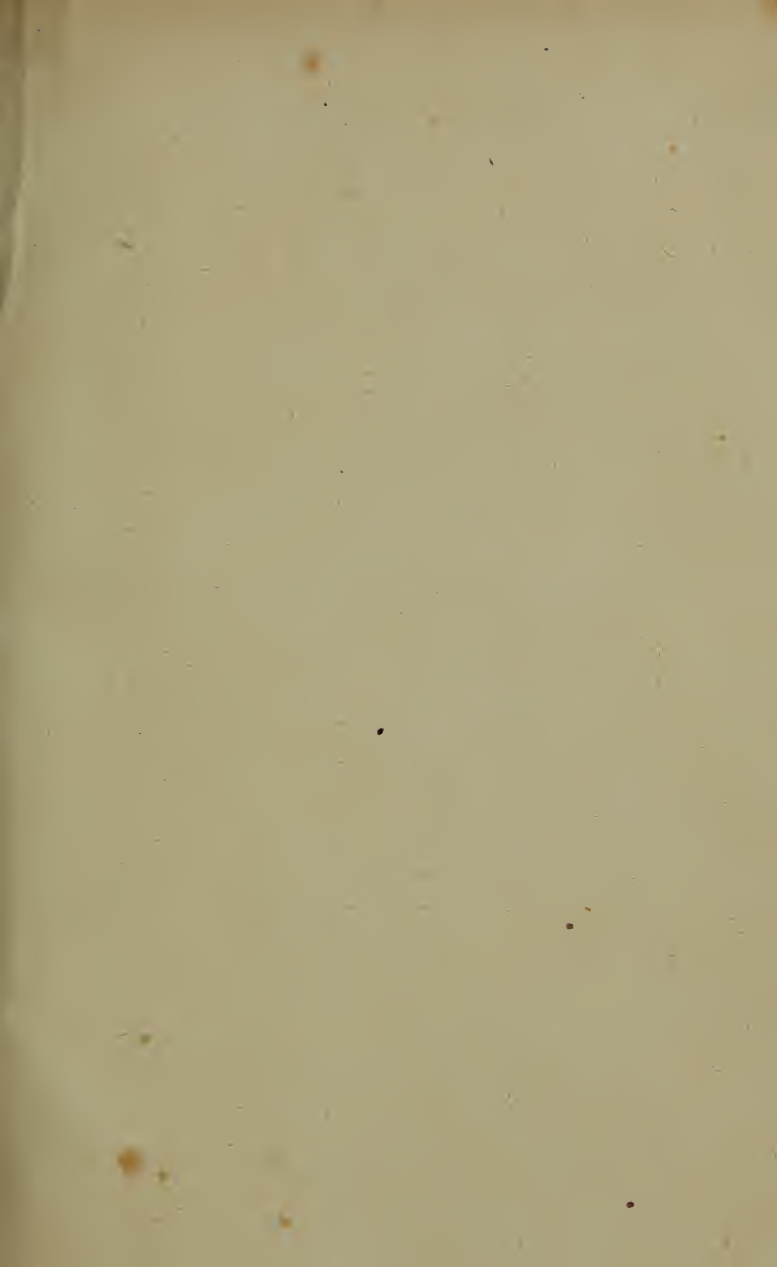
It was several months after the death of James Melville, whose last moments were cheered and rendered blessed, not only by the assurance of pardon and peace with God, but with the tender sympathy of his early friends, that Frank received the following letter :—

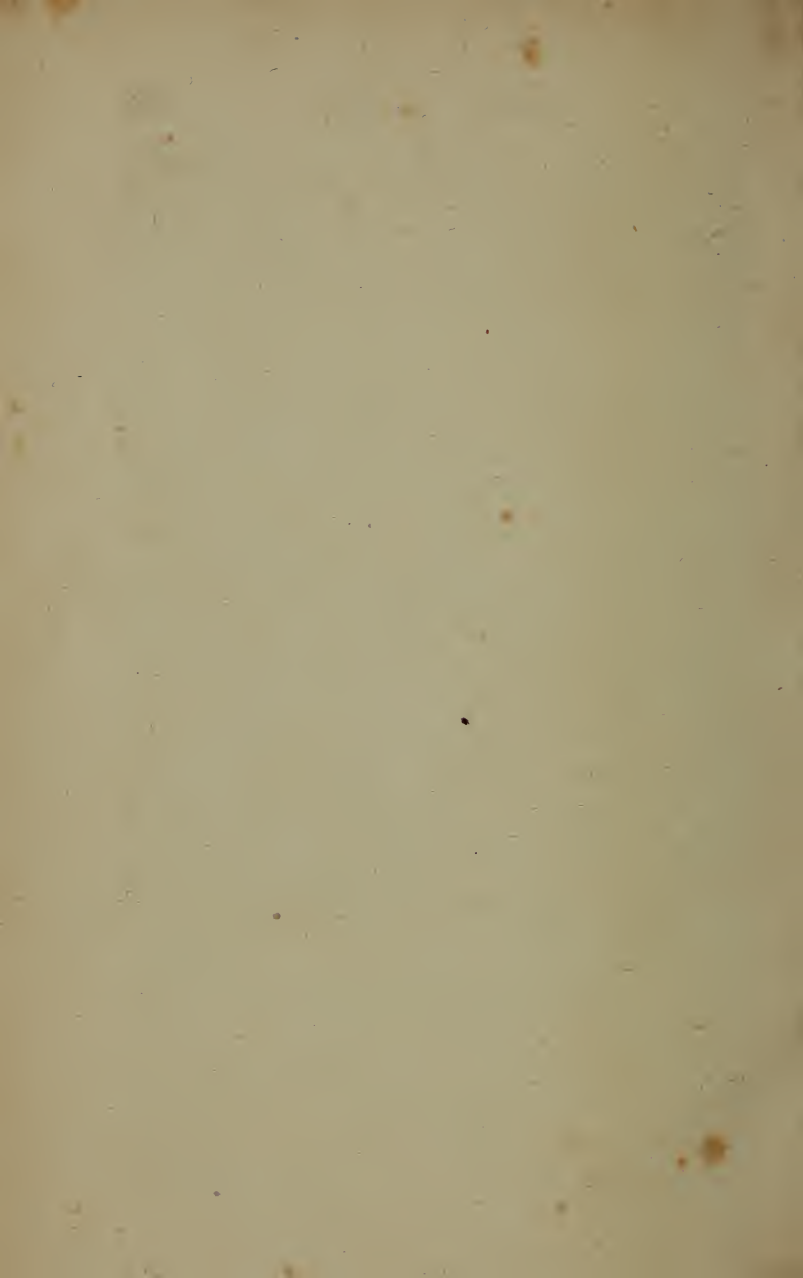
TO REV. F. MERTON.

DEAR SIR,—Most gladly would I address you by a more endearing term, but my former course of conduct forbids me this pleasure. The heart that could forsake the helpless and dependent infant, has no right to call itself *father* to the honored and independent man. This has not always been my opinion; it was reserved for you—you whom I have forsaken to teach me to despise myself. When I first heard of Frank Merton as one whom the intelligent and good delighted to honor, I lost no time in repairing to the city which is proud in being called your home. I

judged of you, sir, by myself—by the world, which has been my god. I had gold for you, Frank Merton; and dreamed that it would gild over, even in your eye, the deeds of my past life—deeds dark as the bottomless pit. I dreamed, too, that my conscience, which for years has goaded me to madness, might receive a lethean draught in an offering like this. Vain thought! I knew not your holy calling; but when I learned it, did not despair. I joined the multitude that thronged to hang upon your lips. Ah! it should have been other lips than those to have pronounced *my* doom. How you tore away the last vestige of the spirit's covering, and dragged that spirit out to be scorched and seared by the breath of truth! It is true that you offered a balm of healing—a fountain of cleansing—but to me it is all a consuming fire. I left the gold for you—where, the inclosed instrument will inform you; for myself, I will see your face no more—no more in this world, or the world to come. There is a fire feeding upon my brain. It must be so, or I should not have hastened

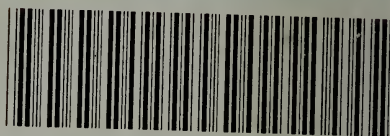






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